positive answer, I took a piece of paper and drew up a bank balance sheet with credit and debit on opposite sides. I showed what items to put under assets, and what to list under debits. in a Central Bank balance sheet. I explained that you cannot just go down into the vault of the Central Bank and take the bank notes as if you had earned the money. We discussed the need for drawing up a national budget and the advantages of a convertible currency. What I had learned about finance at Harvard came in very handy. I was surely not the only one who tried to convince President Keita of the advantages for Mali to remain in a convertible currency zone. Malraux made the same points and he undoubtedly had much greater Influence with Modibo Keita than I ever had.

In the course of this continuous dialogue I had with President Keita, I was asked what I thought about Mali establishing its own Airline. My response was very negative because I thought Mali was too small a country and had an insufficient number of air travelers to make Air Mali a profitable operation. Despite my advice, for a very brief period, a few planes flew under the Air Mali flag. Then, common sense prevailed and Air Mali became part of the regional airline: Air Afrique.

But independence and the departure of the French military also meant that President Keita started to look around to find new sources of assistance for equipping and modernizing the Malian Army. When approached by Modibo Keita whether the U.S. might be Interested in this role, I replied that I would query Washington. Specifically, Modibo Keita wanted training for paratroopers, because the huge size of the country and the desert in the north may require the means to move troops quickly and by air.

The U.S. Government agreed to send a couple of airplanes and trainers to teach the Malians to jump out of planes. A Military Aid Mission was established at Embassy Bamako, and a competent Lieutenant Colonel arrived to head the mission. He took charge of all military cooperation. An agreement was signed --military to military -- which undoubtedly contributed to the good relations between the U.S. and this new West African independent republic, which has been continual for more than 40 years. The military agreement was matched by an economic assistance agreement which was signed in I960. All along the period I remained in charge of this growing U.S. Mission, I kept my French colleague informed of what we were doing with the Malian Authorities.

Q: Were the French disturbed about this?

DEAN: No, I don't think so. At this stage, the important objective was to keep the Soviets out. If we, the U.S., would not have done it, the Soviets were willing to move in, as they had done in Guinea.

Q: Were the Malians getting their idea from Guinea or from Senegal?

DEAN: The French role in Senegal goes back a couple of centuries. In Mali, ex French Sudan, the French presence was much more recent. Some Senegalese had been French citizens for over 200 years, as for example in St. Louis du Senegal which goes back to Louis XV.

The Malians were aware of the problems the Guineans had with the Soviets, but Sekou Toure was an African hero, a nationalist, who had dared to defy De Gaulle. The Malians did not want to offend anybody. They did not defy De Gaulle. As a matter of fact, Modibo Keita had been a

Minister in the French Government in Paris – just as Houphouet Boigny, of the Ivory Coast, had been. Both African leaders were French-speakers and French-educated. When the West Africans asked for independence, De Gaulle gave it to them. The French helped the newly independent states of West Africa and did not object to anybody else coming to support this effort.

But the French colonial past and traditions surfaced from time to time. One day, the Malian Commander in chief of the Army came to the Embassy and asked if we could provide uniforms for the Malian forces. "But we want the buttons to be not American buttons, but French buttons." Our American officer in charge of the Military Assistance Mission inquired: "What do you mean, French buttons?" "Like French cavalry buttons. Not infantry buttons, but cavalry. They are kind of rounded at the top" was the answer. Our American Lieutenant Colonel explained that "Our buttons are flat" and the Malians got the American variety. Don't let me give the wrong impression. Compared to French and European assistance to Mali, our effort was modest. But it was greatly appreciated and above all, it was timely. Mali is not the most promising country as far as resources are concerned. Foreigners were not lining up to come in to exploit their oil, chrome, or whatever they may have. It was not there. Nonetheless, with our timely efforts, and above all warm personal relationship with the Malian leadership, we built a solid link with a country which became more and more democratic with time.

While I was in charge, we had the visit of Edward Kennedy, who was running for the U.S. Senate that year, and Senator Church. When they saw how hard we worked in Mali and the relations we had established with Africans, they became supporters in my later assignments.

Q: I was wondering about Edward Kennedy only because in his very early years, he was a little bit difficult to handle.

DEAN: I found Edward Kennedy and Frank Church to be very outgoing and friendly. Let me give you an example. All staff of foreign missions lived at the Grand Hotel. The Russians, the Yugoslavs, the Bulgarians, the British, the Israelis, and the Americans were there. Everyone was living in the same place. The evening the Senate Delegation arrived in newly independent Mali, there was a dance at the hotel. All the foreigners danced with each other, and with Malians and other Africans from the region. It was co-existence at its best.

In conclusion, I would say that our timely, energetic presence prevented Mali from going the Guinea way. Mali remained in the French Franc Zone, part of West Africa, and with close links to the West. The U.S. had put its best foot forward and Mali did not present an opportunity for communist countries to subvert it or wean Mali away from the path of democracy. Shortly before my departure, a new American ambassador arrived. I relinquished my chargéship to Ambassador Ken Wright and I left for my next assignment a couple of months later.

Q: You left in 1961.

DEAN: Yes, but before discussing my 4-year Washington assignment, let me just say that in Bamako, I made friends for life with Robert Keeley, one of America's great ambassadors, and John Leonard who left the Foreign Service to become a priest. We are friends still today and see each other regularly. Today, Mali is not a major factor. 40 years ago, newly independent African countries were flirting with the Soviet Union because

they postured as friends of the underprivileged and the poor. Guinea had received from the Soviet Union aid and advisers, but their assistance did not develop the country. Mali has become a democratic success story in West Africa. I would like to believe that our opening an Embassy in 1960 and the programs we started in conjunction with the former colonial power had something to do with it.

Q: You came back in 1961 to Washington.

DEAN: I came back in 1961 to Washington to work in the Bureau of African Affairs. I had known "Soapy" Williams when he came to Africa and I had helped him in collecting African artifacts. Prior to taking the job as Assistant Secretary for Africa, a position only created the year he was given the job, Soapy had been running for the presidency of the United States. He was a liberal Democrat. The Africans liked him and he, in turn, liked Africa.

Q: He had been Governor of Michigan.

DEAN: Right. We knew him slightly, and his wife. Nancy, from Grosse Pointe, Michigan.

Q: You were in African Affairs from 1961 until when?

DEAN: Until 1963.

Q: What was your job?

DEAN: I was Officer in charge of Togolese and Malian Affairs.

Q: Oh, yes.

DEAN: It was a time when African States established their first missions in Washington. My job included duties beyond those linked directly to Togo and Mali. For example, when new African ambassadors and their wives arrived in Washington, I often helped them to establish themselves and open a functioning office. My wife also was helpful to Mrs. Rusk and Mrs. Williams to entertain the wives of the newly arrived African ambassadors, who had quite often not been exposed to life in the capital cities of the world. I worked mostly with the French-speaking Africans. Helping the new African ambassadors to hire local French-speaking staff sometimes gave rise to difficult situations. Attractive Haitian ladies had the professional skills, spoke French and English, and knew their way around Washington. But when the new ambassador found the local female staff more attractive than their own older African wives, it could cause a family problem which ended on the desk of the State Department. Another example was trying to persuade some African servants who were brought by the ambassadors that you don't make a wood fire on the floor of the basement of your house, but you turn up the thermostat of your heating mechanism. For two years, we (my wife and I) worked with many of these new African ambassadors and their staffs in making them feel at home in Washington.

During this 2-year tour, President Olympio came on an official visit to the United States, so did Sekou Toure. All official guests of the President were housed in Blair House. The lady in charge of Blair House showed the visiting President to his rooms and those for his staff. She used to say: "Mr. President, this is your room. Mrs. Lincoln slept in this bed. The room for your foreign minister is on your right. On your left, I have put the governor of the central bank of your country. Then,

upstairs are some rooms for your secretaries." Sekou Toure said: "Send the foreign minister upstairs. Send my secretary to the room next to mine." You can Imagine the reaction of the lady In charge of Blair House!

When Olympio came on an official visit to Washington, I had the privilege of writing a paper for President Kennedy and briefing him for five minutes the day before. He asked for my name. "My name is John Gunther Dean. I was asked to brief you." The next day, I accompanied Olympio on his call on the President of the United States. As I came in, President Kennedy said: "John, so happy to see you again. You have done a wonderful job in Togo." President Kennedy gave me a big build-up, and I felt proud to serve my country. Olympio made a very good impression on all American authorities. He clearly felt at ease in an Anglo-Saxon environment. Little did we realize then that shortly thereafter both would be assassinated. Olympio was assassinated in Togo.

Q: How did we figure... What was the cause of this?

DEAN: The cause of Olympio's assassination was well known at the time. Olympio died in the arms of Ambassador Pulada, the second American ambassador to Togo. Olympio, who had his personal residence next to the U.S. Chancery, climbed over the wall to escape his assassins. The man who held the gun was a sergeant at the time. Today, he is the President of Togo and he holds the rank of General!

Q: How did we view this at the time?

DEAN: Olympio was the first African Chief of State to be assassinated. In the U.S., we were debating whether to cut off aid, or recall our ambassador. We left the decision to the African Chiefs of States who had assembled in Africa to debate what action they would take. They

talked... but did nothing. We followed suit. We did nothing. We did not understand in 1963 that if we thought some sanctions should be taken, we had to be out in front in order to play a role for justice and decency. Olympio's assassination was clearly linked to local Togolese political machinations. But there my also have been some geopolitical considerations, So, since neither the Africans nor the former colonial power imposed meaningful sanctions on the very person who killed Olympio, we decided to stay out of the fray.

Q: Were we sort of waiting to see how the French were going to respond?

DEAN: After the Africans did nothing of consequence, the French recognized the new Togolese Government.

In the Autumn of 1963, I was sent to the United Nations in New York to be one of the advisers to the American Delegation to the General Assembly. My job was to advise on the French-speaking African Delegates who represented 18 countries. The voting pattern of that group in 1963 at the United Nations was well-known. The French-speaking Africans (and that Included the former colonies of Congo, Burundi, and Rwanda) had agreed that they would vote all the same way. Sometimes, they discussed in private caucus how they would vote, before the official vote. In the 1963 U.N. General Assembly, the question of recognition of Mainland China and its seat in the SecurityCouncil came up. In those days, the French Delegation had the most influence with the French-speaking Africans. Hence, I decided to work with them. Ambassador Seydoux of France had agreed with Governor Stevenson, the Chief of the U.S. Delegation, that France would vote against recognition in 1963. That was the last year

the French voted the same way as we did. When the vote on China came up, I was sitting with the American Delegation in the big Assembly Hall. The Assistant Secretary General of the U.K. pulled a name out of the hat and that country was the first to cast its vote. This time it was Gabon. All the countries in the French African block --18 countries -- had the instructions to vote as the other French-speaking Africans. So, here was Gabon, the first one. The Assistant Secretary General called out again: "Gabon! Yes? No?" No answer. "Oui? Non?" I was watching Ambassador Seydoux of France. He gently shook his head in a negative way so that others could see it, and finally Gabon came out with a loud "No". It was the last year France voted with the U.S. on the China issue at the U.N.

Q: China got into the United Nations much later, but we were not getting the African vote.

DEAN: Later, the African vote split, and they did not vote any longer as a block.

Q: China really did not get in until 1975.

DEAN: This, I don't know. But shortly thereafter, the French established a Diplomatic Mission in Beijing. Then, around 1971 or so, France sent its first ambassador, which I will discuss later since the incumbant played a major role in Cambodia. At the U.N. I came again across corruption. I was asked to approach certain delegates to vote a certain way in return for financial favors. Since this was not my job, I would refer the chap to somebody else whose job it was to buy votes. Unfortunately, the delegates of the poorer countries were particularly vulnerable and targeted.

Q: We had somebody with whom you could put them in touch.

DEAN: All major countries at the U.N. had people whose job it is to find the "shortcomings" of individual delegates.

Q: I am told by people who claim to know that when Sukarno or somebody like that would appear on a state visit, you would look around for the stewardesses or what have you. The State Department would say: "We don't do that", but they would contact a DC police officer who had connections. There would be a certain accommodation made.

DEAN: I have stayed out of private lives, both those of my American colleagues and those of foreign dignitaries. I have stayed away from using the frailties of human beings as pressure to obtain a diplomatic success. Also, different cultures have different customs. For example, in the Middle East it's very common to give a new arrival a small present in order to get into his or her graces. This could be interpreted as an effort to undermine your integrity. When a foreign businessman is sent to Lake Tahoe and he gets a long week-end at a lovely lodge where he finds company and money to play at the casino, all this at the expense of the inviting company, is that just showing hospitality to a foreigner or is it a way of getting at his integrity?

Q: It's a way of getting at his integrity.

DEAN: There are two different ways of interpreting the same facts. In our example of Lake Tahoe, one way is to consider it corruption. The other is to count it as an essential expense in the interest of the company. Let us return to the United Nations. Some of the African Delegates come to New York and are tempted by the fast social life of the city. Their financial resources are limited. Am I their moral

shepherd? I don't think so. But there is a difference between a delegate who is a stranger in the U.S. and an American Foreign Service Officer who represents America. Basically, most Americans want their representatives - elected or appointed - to behave in a way to avoid controversy and to set a good example.

Q: We all work on this two-track thing. If you take too high a hand, you are not accomplishing what you are supposed to.

DEAN: If it is to get the delegate's vote. I would just pass him or her on to a colleague. I remember a specific example. The new-born daughter of one of the Chiefs of Missions was going to be baptized. He made it known that he did not have the funds to decorate the chapel with flowers. I did find somebody who provided the needed flowers.

While I was at the U.N. in 1963, an unforgettable event occurred: President Kennedy was assassinated in Texas, I remember I was in the Delegates Lounge having lunch with my French counterpart. Mrs. Pandit Nehru, former President of the United Nations General Assembly, sat on the other side of the room. Somebody from her table came over and said: "Is it true that the President has been shot?" Later, I went into the United Nations General Assembly hall and there Governor Stevenson accepted the condolences of the Chiefs of Missions accredited to the United Nations. The sadness, the silence, the seriousness of the foreign diplomats, reflected the shock of the world to the news but it also showed the respect and perhaps even the affection for the United States and what it stands for. Everybody realized this tragedy also had an Impact on the lives of others in the world. Shortly afterwards, we all flew to Washington to help taking care of the dignitaries who came for the funeral.

Q: We will pick this up in 1963. You finished your time with African Affairs and the United Nations.

DEAN: Then, I was assigned to NATO Affairs, in the European Bureau of the State Department.

Q: Today is September 7, 2000. John, let me have the dates of your assignment to the NATO Desk.

DEAN: From 1963 to 1965. In that section, formally known as the Bureau for Regional Political and Military Affairs, I had an outstanding stellar cast of colleagues. My immediate boss was George Vest. Roz Ridgway worked with me, Ron Spiers was Deputy Director. He later became Under Secretary for Political Affairs at the United Nations. David Popper was the Chief. My job was to backstop the Political Advisers Committee of NATO.

Q: I would like to get the dates.

DEAN: I was there from December 1963 until July of 1965. Then, I left to go to the Embassy in Paris.

Q: Could you tell me a little bit about some of the people you were dealing with? Let's talk about George Vest.

DEAN: George Vest was one of the finest Foreign Service officers I have ever met. He was the head of the political side. Both Roz Ridgway and I were working for George. George was a wonderful boss, and Roz a superb colleague. George was not only an excellent Foreign Service Officer, but he cared about the Foreign Service. I came across George again toward the end of my Foreign Service career. He had been Director General of the Foreign Service

Q: He was Director General later.

DEAN: Yes, later» and he was also Assistant Secretary for Europe for a short time, and had some differences with Dr. Kissinger.

Q: He was actually spokesman for a little while until he found he just did not have the stomach.

DEAN: It's people like George Vest and Roz Ridgway, bright, able, and decent, that made that assignment interesting and enjoyable.

Q: Could you talk about Roz Ridgway at that time a bit?

DEAN; Before her assignment to Washington, Roz had been Political Officer in Italy. She had a very perceptive mind and wrote beautifully. At the time, she was single; we often lunched together and talked. We talked a lot about what we wanted to do in life, and that made for a wonderful relationship. She later had a brilliant career in the Foreign Service.

Q: This was 1963 - 1965. Given a certain general over in France, this was a very interesting time.

DEAN: Yes. General de Gaulle is a very complicated person. It was a time when we were discussing already then the one-pillar versus the two-pillar system in the NATO command structure. Our military insisted on the one-pillar system, i.e. the U.S. remaining the sole power holding the top military job in NATO. As seen through U.S. eyes, in these early days, NATO had the U.S. in charge, and the other countries working together under U.S. leadership. Even then, there were people on both sides of the Atlantic who were suggesting that the time had come to have two pillars, i.e. that this alliance would have a North American pillar and a European pillar, with the top military positions divided up between military officers from both sides. The overall commander would remain American. It did not happen.

My job was NATO's Political Advisers Committee. They met once a week In NATO Headquarters in Europe. It was not a discussion, but most of the time a briefing by Americans on subjects of direct concern to the alliance, Only rarely was there an input by other NATO countries. If, for example, a particularly difficult situation in the eastern Mediterranean was in the news, I would go to the folks in the Department of State in charge of this issue who would provide me with a briefing and action paper. After reediting it for use by NATO. I would send it to our Political Adviser or to the U.S. Ambassador to NATO to be used at the meeting.

Q: These Political Advisers were known as POLADs.

DEAN: Yes. It was more of a briefing than a discussion.

Q: How did this develop? Was this just, you might say, American dominance, arrogance, or lack of interest by other countries?

DEAN: The entire NATO establishment goes back to 1950. It was the time of absolute American supremacy. Therefore, people were delighted to have this American umbrella. As we developed NATO, some Europeans were put in high positions, but the entire decision-making process, and the military command structure, pretty much remained in American hands. We felt that we had the responsibility to bring subjects up for discussion, and we also proposed courses of action.

Q: Let's talk a little bit about the briefing business. Where were you getting your thoughts? Who was supplying you to put the prose together?

DEAN: I would get suggestions from the American Mission to NATO regarding the subjects to be placed on the Agenda. With this list, I would go to

the various bureaus in the Department of State to obtain their briefing papers, or at least a paper on how we see the situation. That was then sent by telegram to the POLADs who either circulated it or discussed it. George Vest, who had been very close to one of the Secretary Generals of NATO, knew exactly how It should be presented.

The other part of my job was to backstop the NATO Science Committee. My interest in Science and Technology stems from that period. One of my duties was to accompany the top American Delegate to the NATO Science Committee meetings: Nobel Prize Winner Isidore Rabi. He needed a Political Adviser like he needed a hole in the head. Professor Rabi won his prize in physics. He played a significant role during World War II in the development of our atomic bomb. Since I had an uncle who was also a Nobel Laureate in physics. Otto Stern, Rabi accepted me and took me along as baggage. But I did begin to understand that the NATO Science Committee discussed issues which were just coming onto the horizon: lasers, environment, atomic fall-out, etc. When I was traveling with Professor Rabi, he explained to me how lasers worked and what they can do. His NATO counterparts were also highly interesting people, especially the scientists from England, France. Italy, and Germany. They often discussed the growing role of Science and Technology in foreign affairs. These prominent scientists would also discuss, at fabulous dinners with excellent wines and brandy, new scientific and technical developments and how these inventions would affect the future of the world. It was a privilege just to listen to people like Sir Zolly Zuckerman discussing how the world was going to change as a result of these inventions.

Q: During this time, as I recall it, lawyers came on the scene, and there was great concern because the Soviets seemed to be putting an inordinate concentration on laser technology. These were considered to be killer lasers that could knock down satellites. Battle theories of lasers and all that.

DEAN: All science and technology creations have a dual use. Back in 2001, I had five operations on my eye. Most of them were executed by laser. You can use the laser to destroy tissue and to heal the retina. You can also use lasers on heavy metals. You can also use lasers for war. Hence, lasers have a dual use. Nearly all chemical inventions have a dual use: to heal or destroy. The discussions among NATO scientists were not geared exclusively on how the Russians would use new inventions but how these Inventions would impact on the world in general.

Q: What were the discussions about information technology? I'm talking about computers. It was still in its infancy.

DEAN: I did not attend these. I think there was discussion outside the conference room on this subject. There was some attention placed on remote sensing. At first, remote sensing was an American monopoly. The Russians also had satellites in space, i.e. seeing from the sky what is happening on our small earth. The technology got so refined that these sensing satellites could even read the licence plate on a car from the sky. This technology also played a role in explaining what happened to the plane of the late President of Pakistan, Zia al-Huq. As long as we had the monopoly of knowing what was going on – and above all our interpretation of photography – other nations had to rely on American technology. For example, is there a build-up of forces in a certain area? From this remote sensing image, you could see two divisions being amassed with armor and tanks. At least, that was our Interpretation of the Images.

As long as we had the monopoly, other countries in NATO were dependent on us. As time went on, other NATO countries began to develop similar remote sensing capability. Shortly before the end of the 20th century, the French and German governments got together to help finance an advanced French satellite system to compete with the American system, thereby breaking the monopoly of interpreting remote sensing intelligence. That is of importance because the interpretations may differ and hence the course of remedial action would differ. Perhaps we must all accept that even within NATO, member countries wish to remain in charge of their own destiny and not be dependent on vital intelligence interpretations coming from the U.S. alone.

Q: Was it not a fact that a great many of the European young scientists went to the United States for their higher graduate education?

DEAN: Yes, a lot of people came. But no one country has a monopoly on brains... The people came for graduate work to the United States because our educational system at the time was well developed and advanced, after World War II. These countries had to play catch-up ball, and sending young scientists to the U.S. was one way of doing it. Even the British turned to the U.S. universities and research centers. Before the war, Cambridge University was one of the leading centers of learning for Science and Technology. Now, many young British switch to MIT, Berkeley, or other educational centers in the U.S. This is not only true for the European countries, but for the rest of the world as well. But the NATO structure in those years was basically an American show. Perhaps, if more responsibility had been passed on in the 1960s to the Europeans, the NATO structure today, in the 21st century, would be somewhat different.

Would there be a greater willingness by the Europeans to cooperate? Anyway, in 2002, NATO underwent a major change with the association of Russia with that body.

Q: Of course, John, you are talking as a diplomat. We understand these things. But as a practical politician in the United States, it was very difficult to continue to keep American troops over in Europe. You had your friend, Mike Mansfield, that kept talking about withdrawing troops and all. One way we can toss the raw meat to a reluctant Congress is, we have control of these American troops and other troops in NATO.

DEAN: Let me put it very bluntly. We do not keep American troops overseas for other peoples' interest. It is in our own national interest to do certain things. The best example is the presence of American troops in Okinawa. We have troops in Okinawa not because the Japanese want them there, but because this happens to suit our objectives as well as certain Japanese policies. But, usually, troops and planes stationed on foreign soil are not popular with the population of the host country. A good example is the request by the German Government to the U.S. Air Force to stop overflying certain parts of Bavaria. There is nothing wrong with the United States, as the major power in the world, having stationed U.S. troops in various parts of the world for strategic global interests. I don't think we should justify all foreign bases or troop presence abroad as doing a favor to others. At best. it is a shared, common goal.

Q. I know, but it is a political battle that has been constantly waged and it's getting more and more difficult to defend. We are talking about people who really are sensitive to foreign affairs, to costs, and they ask: why not bring our boys home?

DEAN: Unless we can explain to our legislators that our troops are overseas for our own national interests, we won't get any funding from Congress very long. Our diplomats have a more difficult time convincing some

foreign governments they should permit our forces to remain in these bases despite the popular unrest to get U.S. troops withdrawn from their soil. In short, if we want to keep troops overseas, it's because we think it is in our own overall interest.

Q: This is understood, but not necessarily within our political structure.

DEAN. I agree. But the influence of Foreign Service officers on Senators, on Congressmen, is very limited. Legislators are swayed by domestic, local considerations. How do you explain to our Congress that in a changing world, the U.S. position must also change. When we started NATO in 1950, the U.S. was the all-powerful sole victor coming out of the Second World War, and we made the other members of NATO "partners". Building up our NATO allies as co-decision makers and partners has been the role of U.S. diplomacy over the last 50 years as the NATO alliance changed in character. What is wrong with having an Italian commander for the NATO Mediterranean fleet home ported in Naples? Why must it be an American admiral? If we want control over more of our ships, we send them to another port, for example Alexandria, Egypt. We put an American admiral in charge. Except it won't be a NATO fleet. There are ways of working with NATO as an organization of mutual interest to North America and the Western European countries, while at the same time keeping certain national forces outside the NATO framework.

Q: Back to 1965, when you got there, what was the situation in France regarding NATO? Were we seeing the handwriting on the wall? Were we getting ready for De Gaulle to say "Move out"?

DEAN: Our relationship with De Gaulle goes back to 1940. When De Gaulle came to power in 1944, he really did not have a lot of U.S. support. During the Second World War, De Gaulle had the support of Winston Churchill but not of Roosevelt. De Gaulle was a nationalist. At one point, during the war, Roosevelt supported General Giraud and not De Gaulle. Some Americans found De Gaulle too nationalistic and not enough of a supporter of the over-all goals of the United States during the war. As Churchill put it: De Gaulle was the heaviest cross he had to bear. The Cross of Lorraine was the emblem of the Free French. In my opinion, De Gaulle understood power probably better than most. He made his major contribution -- and it angered Americans as well at the time -- when just before the Allied landing in Normandy, the Free French parachuted people into France. When the American, Canadian, or British generals landed, these agents of De Gaulle said: "In the name of the Republic of France, I thank you for helping us liberate my country, I am the Representative of the legal French Government". During the war, we had prepared at Camp Richie in Maryland, just as we had done for Italy, a military government of occupation for France. We had printed occupation money, and prepared French-speaking officials to administer the country. When our people landed in Normandy, unlike Italy, we encountered a French Government which had taken charge and voided any need for an allied "occupation". Every move by the U.S., De Gaulle always asked himself "What does this mean for France?" I find this quite normal for a foreign Chief of State to defend his country's long-term interest. It was frustrating for others. The French – and above all De Gaulle – thought that they had a role to play in the world and they made known their views. This approach led, in 1966, to De Gaulle asking NATO to leave France, because he no longer thought it was in France's long-term interest to have foreign troops on French soil. This again changed when the European Union came of age.

Q: In 1965, how did we view the Soviet threat?

DEAN: At the time, U.S. foreign policy centered on containing Soviet expansionism. With this threat, Congress voted funds for the U.S. military establishment -- and later for stationing -- missiles on European soil.

Q: This was in the 1980s.

DEAN: The stationing of U.S. missiles came in the late 1970s. I was then Ambassador to Denmark. In 1966, the request by De Gaulle to move NATO out of France came quite suddenly and unexpectedly.

Q: Did we see any particular reason for the Soviets to attack Western Europe at that point? Obviously, this is what NATO was technically about, but did we see this as being a possibility? In talking to people over the lunch table or military people, how did they see the possibility that the Soviets might attack us? Be very frank,

DEAN: I am not an expert on Soviet policy. On NATO, I had a very narrow responsibility, preparing our delegation for POLADs meetings and the NATO Science Committee. I am certainly not qualified to discuss the question of the Soviet Union and the perceived threat, real or imaginary. All I knew was that both sides felt they had to be prepared militarily, because mutual distrust prevailed. The examples of Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and the building of the Berlin Wall, were a clear indication that the Soviet Union wanted to maintain or expand its ideology and control in Eastern Europe.

Q: In your meetings, did you get involved with delegations from other countries, or was it just the Science Delegations and that's it?

DEAN: I did not attend the POLADs meetings, just the Science Committee. It led to my assignment to the American Embassy in Paris as .the regional expert on East Asia. In 1965, Southeast Asia was one of the confrontation areas in the world. I welcomed my new assignment in Paris.

Q: So you were there from 1965...

DEAN: From 1965 to 1969.

Q: An interesting time. When you arrived in Paris in 1965, what was the political situation in France?

DEAN: Again, keep in mind that my assignment was East Asia Affairs. I was not reporting on domestic political affairs. While I was in Paris, during the 1968 upheaval, I was as much a spectator as anybody else. I was not involved in predicting it or writing about it. My main job in Paris, from 1965 to 1969, was dealing with Southeast Asia and how the French could help us in a situation they knew well. Most of my time was spent on Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

Q: President Johnson at just about that time was beginning to introduce ground troops.

DEAN: Yes. At first, we only had advisers to the Vietnamese military and civilian authorities, but we were moving towards sending American troops. We were very interested In talking with the French because they had decades of experience in dealing with the countries of Indochina. My main French contact was the Director for Asian Affairs in the Quai d'Orsay, the French Foreign Office, Etienne Manac'h. He was a most interesting person. He was far from being anti-American. He told me one day, with some sentimentality, how well he remembered when President Woodrow Wilson arrived in France in

1918 and how he, as a young boy, stood there waving a flag welcoming the American "liberator". He vividly remembered the arrival of the first American troops in France in 1917. "Lafayette, here we are". Manac'h considered himself all his life a friend of America. Born in Brittany, Manac'h remained loyal to De Gaulle and spent most of the war years as a professor at the French Lycee in Istanbul, Turkey. During my years in Paris, I went to his office every week. I was not a high ranking member of the Embassy, but he, as Chief of Asian Affairs, always received me with open arms. He even introduced me to the Foreign Minister of France, Monsieur Debré. Perhaps my ability to speak French and relay precisely what he told me was the reason for the friendly reception at the Quai d'Orsay. My lengthy reports on what Manac'h told me about Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam are still available at the State Department. France had maintained a Diplomatic Mission in Hanoï and 'the French also passed messages from the North Vietnamese to us. At this stage, the French still had a major influence in Laos and Cambodia. A few years later, Manac'h became the first Ambassador from France to Communist China. De Gaulle had confidence in him. Manac'h played a major role again at that post. Years later, when I was Ambassador to Cambodia, Manac'h transmitted my messages to Sihanouk when the Prince was living in Beijing from 1970 to 1975. Manac'h was the person who helped bring together President Giscard d'Estaing and President Ford, in December 1974, to entice Sihanouk to return to Cambodia to put an end to the war. It failed. But in the years 1965-69 we made friends in the French Foreign Office who tried to find ways to help us in the Vietnam imbroglio in which we found ourselves. We also started in Paris exchanging ideas through Manac'h with the North Vietnamese Delegation in Paris headed by Mai Van Bo.

Q. When you say you started negotiations . . .

DEAN: We had, thanks to Monsieur Manac'h, direct access to the North Vietnamese Delegation in Paris, One day, Manac'h said to me: "I would like you to meet the Editor in Chief of "L'Humanité" (this was the leading French communist newspaper). I think he can help you get some of the mail out from Hanoï written by American prisoners." I went to see the Editor of l'Humanité, Monsieur André, who was living in one of the suburbs of Paris. He had two small apartments put together into one large one. On the wall, he had magnificent Picassos. Monsieur André said: "A French journalist by the name of Madeleine Riffaut is proceeding to Hanoi. Do you want her to bring back any messages from American prisoners?" I said: "Yes, by all means it's very important that we hear from them and know what's going on at the Hanoi Hilton" (the place where our American prisoners were held). She went and came back with many letters written by American prisoners in Hanoi. These messages I was able to pass on to the families in the United States. Among them, was a tape with pictures of who is today, Senator McCain. At the time, McCain was Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Navy Air Corps and had been shot down over North Vietnam. He had parachuted into a lake in Hanoi, and in the landing had broken both of his arms. Among the pictures, was one of McCain holding up both arms to show his bandages. Ms. Riffaut brought back that picture and It was taken immediately to his father, Admiral McCain, who was Commander of the NATO fleet in London at the time. Manac'h facilitated these contacts. He also facilitated contacts for me. He was telling me what the Representative of North Vietnam in Paris, Mr. Mat Van Bo, was saying. (A book on his Paris days was published by him in the 1990s in Vietnamese.)

Much of what we learnt about Hanoi, before the Paris Peace Talks, came through Mr. Manac'h. Mai Van Bo was in one room, and I was in another room. Manac'h would go forth and back to find out what was the response to a specific issue. For example, in very early 1968, I came back from one of these meetings and wrote a cable saying: "I understand that the North Vietnamese are agreeable to holding talks on Vietnam in Paris". Whereupon. I received a thundering reply from Mr. Rostow "We will never go to Paris." Since in this exchange, I was just a reporter, I took Mr. Rostow's message back to Mr. Manac'h. "You tell me one thing, and look what I get back from the U.S. National Security Adviser". He said "Don't worry, it has already been decided between President Johnson and President de Gaulle that the meetings will take place in Paris."

Q: A little background. You being the contact person, obviously, this was of tremendous national interest. Who was briefing you and telling you what you could do?

DEAN: Nobody, because I was mostly a channel of communications. In the Embassy hierarchy, I was in the Political Section under the supervision of the Political Counselor Richard Funkhauser. But Ambassador Bohlen had instructed me that on specific issues, I should report directly to him.

Q: I have to mention that that was an extremely able Embassy at the time.

DEAN: The DCM was Bob McBride who later went as U.S. Ambassador to Zaire. Serving with Ambassador Bohlen was one of the great experiences of my career. One day. Ambassador Bohlen called me into his office and said: "John, we've got too many Johns around here. I am going to call you 'Josh'." From then on, I was 'Josh'.

In early 1968, it became apparent that what Monsieur Manac'h had told me about the convening in Paris of a conference to find a solution to the Vietnam conflict was about to happen. Ambassador Bohlen had near his office a "scrambler phone", that is a phone that was secure and which was used nearly exclusively by him if he had to discuss a sensitive issue with the Secretary of State. In those days, it was Dean Rusk. Ambassador Bohlen suggested that I could use it , if needed, regarding the arrangements for the Vietnam Conference. But before I ever used it, I got asked one day to come quickly to the Ambassador's office because a person in the Department of State wanted to talk to me. When I picked up the receiver, I heard a male voice saying that "Secretary Rusk wanted to speak with you". Next, I heard Dean Rusk instructing me to report back to him, by phone, when the location of the site for the conference was discussed in Paris by the French with the North Vietnamese. Shortly after that telephone conversation, I talked to Monsieur Manac'h at the French Foreign Office and said: "I understand that there is an agreement on holding a conference in Paris, but do you have any specific site in mind? Manac'h left the room and went next door where the North Vietnamese Representative. Mai Van Bo, was waiting for him. Four different sites were under consideration. They were in different parts of Paris. Among them was the old Majestic Hotel, which was the place where the Peace Talks were held. With this information in hand, I returned to the Embassy and telephoned Secretary Rusk's office. Since I was passed on directly to the Secretary of State, I was too nervous to sit down and stood up during the entire telephone conversation. I discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each site, and passed on Manach's recommendation that the Majestic Hotel site appeared to be the best location for all parties. Mai Van Bo also agreed; so the site was settled.

Then, the question arose whether there were going to be two delegations or four delegations? This was an important decision. Were the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong of South Vietnam one delegation? Were the Americans and the South Vietnamese Government one side? Or were there four separate delegations? The decision had political, legal, and practical ramifications. The seating around the table would reflect that decision. I want to give credit to a colleague of mine because it was my colleague Jack Perry, who came up with a solution of the seating at the negotiating table, which left the issue open to interpretation. He said: "You know, you ought to have one big table and just fill the whole room with that table. Also, you need separate entry doors. One group enters through one door and sits on that side of the table, the other group enters through the other door and sits on the other side of the table; this fuzzes the question whether you have two sides or four separate parties. Manac'h went himself to the French Government store-house to find a table big enough to fill the room — and the conference room had two separate doors. Since there was a little bit of space between the table and the wall, two small secretarial tables were introduced, one on each side to divide the room into two halves. In this way, clearly, there were two sides. The South Vietnamese Government sat on the same side as the Americans, and the Viet Cong sat on the side of the North Vietnamese. The bathrooms were not separate. As a matter of fact, they could be used in a way of permitting negotiators to meet discreetly to hold confidential brief exchanges.

Q: This is always a problem as we get more women into diplomacy. I can't tell you how many times I have talked about personnel assignments, issues being taken care of, during the pee break.

DEAN: The U.S. Delegation was headed by Ambassador Harriman and Secretary Vance. Phil Habib came with them as the top Foreign Service Officer.

Q: Vance was not a Secretary, was he?

DEAN: He had been Deputy Secretary of Defense before that time. The lowest man on this delegation was Richard Holbrooke. In this delegation of 13 people, Richard Holbrooke and I often were the sole dissenters. We were negotiations-oriented. Since I was in liaison with the French, I looked to the French to help us find compromises acceptable to both sides. Richard went on to have a wonderful career in the 1990s.

Q: He is today Ambassador to the United Nations. He was quite junior in 1968.

DEAN: He was the lowest man on the totem pole. When Phil Habib arrived in May 1968, he stayed in my apartment for three weeks until he got his own lodging. Phil and I became close friends. In parts, I turned over my contacts to him. He became the American contact with Mai Van Bo and Manac'h. Phil spoke good French. He was one of the best and most decent officers in the Foreign Service. In 1992, I flew over to Washington especially from France to attend the memorial service at the National Cathedral for Phil Habib.

I don't want to anticipate, but let me go back to something which was equally important. This occurred in January 1967. Robert Kennedy came to Paris and John Gunther Dean was made Control Officer for Robert Kennedy's visit.

Q: Robert Kennedy at that time was Senator from New York.

DEAN: He had been elected Senator from New York. In 1967, he was considered to be the front-runner for the Democrats in the Presidential election. My job during this visit to Paris consisted in picking him up at the airport and accompanying him in his official calls. While in Paris, he also received a tremendous amount of fan mail. He came with his friend, Bill van den Heuvel, who later served a short time as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva. As Control Officer, one of my jobs was to answer the mail for his signature. When he made official calls, I went along as his interpreter. One day, he asked to see the French Minister of Culture, Andre Malraux, who had just returned from seeing Mao Tse Tung in Beijing. We had a two-hour conversation where I was the notetaker and interpreter of that conversation. Robert Kennedy was very interested in what was going on in Beijing, what Mao Tse Tung was like, etc... They had a long conversation.

(As I had mentioned earlier, I had met Andre Malraux back in Mali, and indeed he was very gracious in remembering that event.) It took several hours to write the reporting telegram on that meeting. Then, Marshal Juin, one of the great French military leaders of the Second World War, died. His coffin was lying in state at the Invalides which is the 17th century building housing the military trophies and history of France, built under Louis XIV. Napoleon's tomb is also located there. Kennedy said: Let's go and pay our respects to Marshal Juin. Get me a wreath with the inscription "From the Kennedys". The American Embassy's administrative staff got us the wreath. With the wreath in hand, we drove to the Invalides. Indian file, we advanced to the coffin, as French soldiers lined in parade dress the path to the coffin. I carried the wreath. Kennedy was in front of me. Then, I gave the wreath to the Senator, and the Senator gave the wreath to a French military officer with whom he advanced to the coffin draped with a big French flag. The Senator put the wreath on the coffin, kneeled down, and sobbed. It was very dramatic, The television was grinding away at a mile a minute. The many spectators were stunned by the gesture of sympathy by this prominent American political leader. The Kennedys came often to France. Robert Kennedy's mother, Rose, had come to Paris nearly every year. The French public was clearly impressed by Robert Kennedy's friendly attitude toward the French people and their leaders.

As we returned to the Embassy, the Senator received a phone call from the French Foreign Office that he should come over for a meeting. At the encounter, there were four people in the room. On the French side was Mr. Manac'h, Director for Asian Affairs, On the American side, were Senator Kennedy, Bill van den Heuvel, Kennedy's friend, and Dean as the notetaker. Mr. Manac'h said that the French had received three days ago

a message from the Vietnamese which was being held for this meeting, at the request of the French Foreign Minister Michel Debré. It was what was then called the first peace signal from Hanoi. The message from Ho Chi Minh was: "If you stop the bombing of North Vietnam, we will come to the negotiating table." The date of our memorable meeting was the end of January 1967. The French Government wanted Senator Kennedy to transmit this message to the President of the United States. We are one year before any discussion about peace talks in Paris. I went back to the Embassy and realized that Senator Kennedy had been given an important message. I wrote up the conversation as a top-secret telegram. Before showing my draft to Senator Kennedy, I went back to see Monsieur Manac'h again. It was not easy to see him. He was terribly busy. I said: "Would you please read this? Is this what you told the Senator?" He said: "Yes, it's an accurate report of what I said." I showed the telegram to Senator Kennedy at 6:00 pm and he agreed to having it sent. The Senator returned the next day to Washington, and I flew to Egypt with my wife for a ten day holiday. Before leaving, the Senator wrote me a brief note; "John, if there is anything I can ever do for you -- officially or personally -- don't hesitate to let me know. Bob."

Prior to the meeting with Kennedy, I had worked with a couple of very senior American personalities, one of whom was Mr. George Ball, who was interested in contacts with the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. They had representatives in Algeria and in Egypt. I had also worked with Senator Claiborne Pell, who was the only former Foreign Service Officer in the Senate in recent times. The latter wanted to meet Mai Van Bo when Pell had come to Paris on a personal visit. This happened in 1966-1967.

In early February 1967, my wife and I went to Cairo. From there, we took a boat to Luxor. While in Luxor at the hotel, I received a phone call: "John, your name is on the front pages of the newspapers. Your telegram reporting on Senator Kennedy's meeting at which he received, via the French, the "signal" from Hanoi, is on the front page of "The New York Times". You had better get back to Paris because apparently the President is angry about the leak, and you are being blamed for the leak. You have a very good chance of being thrown out of the Foreign Service." I said: "How can I be blamed? I left Paris, went to Cairo, and I'm now in Luxor. I was not even around to leak anything." But I did fly back immediately to Paris. Fortunately, I had a fabulous Ambassador, Ambassador Chip Bohlen who was in Washington at the time. When this story broke, he defended me.

The event is also described by Schlesinger in his book on Robert Kennedy. The newspaper reported that upon his return to Washington, Robert Kennedy went to the White House to brief the President on the 'peace signal' from Hanoi. President Johnson is alleged to have accused Robert Kennedy that the State Department was particularly friendly to him. The "peace signal" in January 1967 was the beginning of the fallout between President Johnson and the potential Presidential contender, Robert Kennedy. Fortunately, Ambassador Bohlen was back in Washington on consultation and he defended me. President Johnson was quoted as saying: "Who is that fellow, John Gunther Dean? Fire him !" Ambassador Bohlen pointed out that it could not be Dean because he left Paris immediately after Kennedy's departure from Paris and he was in Egypt at the time the story broke." The leaking of the telegram reporting on the Hanoi signal was traced back to one of the Assistant Secretaries in State, and that it was done for political reasons.

But this was not the only time I was in hot waters during my duties with the U.S. Delegation to the Vietnam Peace Negotiations. One day, perhaps toward the end of 1968, in one of my conversations with Monsieur Manac'h, I asked quite innocently: "Monsieur le Directeur, why don't you help us to extricate ourselves from this situation in Vietnam?" I also alluded to my years in Indochina and the fact that the French also had been unable to cope with the Vietnamese drive for unification and Independence. Now, the U.S. was more and more involved in the quagmire. After that meeting, Monsieur Manac'h went to see the French Foreign Minister, Michel Debré, who was close to de Gaulle, and explained that Dean had suggested that the French help the U.S. to extricate themselves from the Vietnam imbroglio. Later that same evening, Cy Vance got a phone call from the French Foreign Minister to come and see him. When confronted by Debré with Dean's remarks made to Manac'h, Secretary Vance made it very clear that Dean was not authorised to put forward any ideas to the French authorities and that Dean had been speaking on his own. I laugh about this incident sometimes, and wonder whether the idea of a "brokered solution" in 1968 would not have been better than what actually happened. I continued working with Manac'h until my departure from Paris in the summer of 1969.

I would like to say a word about Manac'h's deputy, Charles Malo. He is the only French ambassador who served twice as Ambassador to China. Since we were both young at the time. we enjoyed a close professional relationship. I have seen him again after our retirement from the Foreign Service. Malo is today one of the few people alive who could bear out some of the events I cite in connection with the Peace Talks. Whenever Manac'h was not available. I met with Monsieur Malo at the Quai d'Orsay.

Q: Did you find the French critical of the U.S. getting bogged down in Vietnam?

DEAN: Not at this stage. A few years ago, I appeared on French Television. It's one of the shows devoted to the discussion of history. It's entitled "The Meaning of History". I was asked about the American involvement in Vietnam and Cambodia, and specifically whether the French did a better job in Indochina than the U.S. I replied that I did not think anybody did a better job or a worse job. Rather, the mistake was made in 1945 by all western countries, including France and the United States, who did not recognize that the time for overt political colonialism in Asia had come to an end. In 1954, Mendes France tried to extricate France from Indochina with the help of the Geneva Conference. Unfortunately, the U.S. followed in French footsteps and the U.S. also could not defeat Vietnamese nationalism and drive for unification. If anybody was wrong, I think It was the West for not seeing early enough the rise of nationalism around the world and the drive for an Asian identity.

Q: Being with this delegation that came at this time, what were you picking up from the attitude of Harriman, Vance, and Habib? What did they expect? How were things going? What did they want?

DEAN: I think most of these personalities wanted to find an honorable end to the confrontation. The military briefer every day was Colonel Paul Gorman, later four-star General, and one of the brainiest military officers I ever encountered. When I was in Vietnam in 1970, he was in charge of the 101st Airborne Division. In the course of his briefing, I would hear him say: "Our bombers hit a shipyard." Averell Harriman would Inject; "What do you mean, shipyard? A couple of guys hulling out a few tree trunks, that's what you are talking about". There was

certainly a will to work with the North Vietnamese. Both Harriman and Vance tried to find ways of meeting with the North Vietnamese, away from the limelight, in efforts to find a mutually agreeable formula. But It takes two to tango. In November 1968, delegation members and certain Embassy officials were all at breakfast at the Ambassador's residence when election results were coming in. By that time. Ambassador Bohlen had been replaced by Sergeant Shriver, President Kennedy's brother-in-law. The results showed Nixon elected and Humphrey had lost. The negotiating delegation appointed by a Democrat, President Johnson, knew that meant the end of their tenure. When Cabot Lodge arrived, I continued my liaison work with the French, but the action was between the U.S. and the Vietnamese Delegation. Although Kissinger and Le Duc Tho received the Nobel Prize for their work in Paris, the meetings did not lead to a negotiated solution. The Paris Peace Talks led to the Vietnamization of the war effort: withdrawing of U.S. troops and letting the South Vietnamese face the North by themselves. As everybody knows, the war ended with the collapse of the South Vietnamese Government some years later, and the unification of Vietnam under Hanoi control.

Q: In 1975.

DEAN: Yes, But back in the summer of 1969, I received word that I should proceed to Saigon to work in the political section, as deputy to the chief of that key section.

Q: Who was this?

DEAN: Martin Hertz, later U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria. The State Department decided to give me a year off to recharge my batteries. I said: "I will

go back to Indochina next year, if you so desire." I kept my word. Remember, I had spent 5 years in Indochina, from 1953 to 1958. Few people had served in the same area as long as I did. I had also spent four years in Paris working essentially on Indochina. I was tired and I wanted a change.

I was sent to the Center for International Affairs at Harvard, the program headed by Robert Bowie. That was to be my seventh year at Harvard.

Q: Before we talk about that. I realize you said you were a bystander on domestic French political events. What did your fellow officers at the Embassy in May and June of 1968 say about the events of that time in Paris? How were they seeing these events? What were you getting from your wife?

DEAN: Nothing from my wife. Basically, my wife has always kept out of politics. As I told you, we got to Paris in 1965. You ask about NATO and De Gaulle's decision to have NATO move out of Paris, when the unexpected request came for NATO to move out of France to another country, the Belgian Government advanced a site in southern Belgium: Bauffe-Chievre. During the First World War, my wife's grandmother's chateau had been requisitioned by the Germans. In 1940, the German Luftwaffe made the same place its western headquarters and built a runway for aircraft on the adjoining land. When in 1945 the chateau was destroyed by Allied bombing, the Belgian Government took over the land, and in 1966 offered the site to NATO. The offer was accepted.

Q: You mentioned that before, about the property having been owned by your wife's family.

DEAN: Yes. That became the NATO Headquarters. Not only in Europe, but generally, my wife stayed completely out of politics wherever we were.

Q: What was the reaction within the Embassy? First, let's think about having France kick NATO out of France,

DEAN: The Officers at the Embassy usually worked at that tine with their French counterparts. There was no anti-French feeling. We had many common goals with the French, but obviously every country has its own national interests. They do not always coincide. There was no fear or distrust of the French. We knew that De Gaulle had his agenda which might differ on certain issues with U.S. objectives. Ambassador Bohlen had been at the Yalta Conference and De Gaulle had not attended this conference where major decisions were made on the shape of post-war Europe. It was one of De Gaulle's great regrets not having been invited to that meeting. Was it Yalta or something else, De Gaulle had a tremendous respect for Ambassador Bohlen. Few people knew more about De Gaulle's relationship with Ambassador Bohlen than Robert Barrett, who was once my deputy in Lebanon years later. In 1968, he was Ambassador Bohlen's personal assistant. De Gaulle listened to Bohlen, and Bohlen listened to De Gaulle. It was two heavy-weights exchanging views. De Gaulle, who usually was quite protocol conscious, never turned down Bohlen's request for a meeting -- day or night, week-ends or Sundays. The two men understood each other. That does not mean they always agreed, but they could work together very well. Ambassador Bohlen was a consummate professional, In 1969, De Gaulle had a referendum on decentralization of the French administration. His proposal was rejected by the electorate. He resigned and died in 1970. So, Bohlen's ambassadorship corresponded to the closing days of De Gaulle's life. De Gaulle respected professionalism and be respected the role Bohlen played in the Roosevelt Administration, where he was one of the experts on the Soviet Union.

Q: Was the Embassy at all divided about the De Gaulle decision to kick NATO out? I can see this going two ways. One, the diplomats saying "Okay. fine. So be it. We 've got to deal with this." I can also see hardcore people saying "Screw this", arousing all sorts of francophobia and all that.

DEAN: Personally, I had a full plate-looking after East Asian Affairs at the Embassy. I was not involved in the reporting or analyzing of French domestic polities. The only time I was involved in domestic politics was in 1968 when there was a student uprising. Ambassador Shriver wanted to attend, as a spectator, a meeting at the French National Assembly, which he did, in the galleries. I did not think it was a good idea for the U.S. Ambassador to be seen at that point at the National Assembly, when a domestic issue was under intense debate. In my opinion, when there is a domestic political squabble, it is much better for the American Ambassador not to be perceived as being involved.

Q: Did you ever run across Vernon Walters?

DEAN: Very much so. We had different approaches to the problems of the day. but personally, we got along well. Since he was such an accomplished linguist, he was used by different American administrations for important missions. He came out of the military, rose to the rank of Major General, and then was appointed to positions at CIA and State. He worked well with his French counterparts, who had known him for many years, going back to the days he was Eisenhower's interpreter. Dick Walters (which is really what he goes by) spoke absolutely impeccable French, and many other languages. On Vietnam, he was very much of a hawk. He said: "My day will be made when we march down Main Street in Hanoi." Having said this. Dick Walters and I became good friends, although he would add: "Oh. John wants to negotiate everything. He wants to compromise. No, we have to stand our ground."

Walters and I had different politics. He is an honest, decent, committed person. When you are friends, you can hold different political views. I differed with him on many issues, I start with the assumption that your adversary today is your friend tomorrow, and vice versa. Therefore, I always want to maintain contact with as many people as possible. I don't believe in building walls around a people, which usually ends up by building up its leader. I believe that the art of diplomacy is maintaining contact and trying to resolve issues without the use of violence, if possible. For example, I fought in Vietnam in 1970-1972. Immediately after leaving Vietnam, I tried to negotiate with those who were backed by the North Vietnamese. Dick Walters has a more military approach. I had serious reservations about the use of military power in today's world to solve serious international problems. With the development -- with or without our consent -- of more and more highly sophisticated technology, it became obvious to me that more countries will have lethal weapons of mass destruction. People knew my views when I was assigned to Military Region One in Vietnam as Deputy to the Corps Commander. I went to Vietnam with the U.S. military because I strongly feel that if your country needs you, one has the duty to comply with the decision of the President.

Q: You went to Harvard for your seventh year.

DEAN: As a Fellow of the University.

Q: - From 1969 to 1970.

DEAN: That's right.

Q: What were you doing there?

DEAN: I had no specific duties. It was a year when I could catch up with what was going on in the U.S. in various disciplines of society. By 1969, I had left university 20 years earlier, and I was trying to catch up on what was new in the arts, poetry, music, economy, science... in short, society.

One day, during my year at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard, I saw a brutal attack on a colleague who was also assigned to the seminar. Navy Captain Kruger, who had been a Navy pilot in Vietnam. Some elements in the Boston area were so fiercely opposed to U.S. involvement in Vietnam, that Kruger was attacked with sticks and clubs. He was wounded and needed medical care. I was appalled that this could happen on the Harvard campus.

Q: Were these Harvard students doing it?

DEAN: I don't know whether they were Harvard students, or were rabble rousers from the outside who had infiltrated the campus, but they obviously had targeted our colleague as a symbol of U.S. military involvement in Vietnam. I was appalled by it. While you can oppose government policy, holding individuals who carry out the policy responsible and physically hurt them is despicable.

During my tour of duty in Vietnam 1970-72, I would like to say perhaps at this stage that my wife and three children stayed in Cambridge. Whenever anti-Vietnam demonstrations or vigils were held in Cambridge, my children and wife always stood by me. For example, when I left Harvard for Vietnam to serve with the U.S. military, my children said: "If my dad is involved, it can't be all bad" and they did not participate with their fellow students in demonstrations. I remain grateful to them

for having had faith in me and allowing me to do the job asked of me by our country.

At Harvard, all the participants in the program had to write a paper. I wrote my paper in 1969 on Vietnam and the need for a "negotiated solution". These words became the key in later years to my efforts to find "controlled negotiated solutions". That paper is available at Harvard, and I have a copy at home.

Q: What was your impression of how the authorities at Harvard handled the demonstrators and the situation? I was somewhat removed. As a matter of fact, I was in Saigon during the time you were at Harvard. I had the feeling that Harvard, Yale, Columbia, and some other places, did not come out very well as letting the lunatics take over the asylum.

DEAN: I would not go that far. Students, and for that matter every citizen, have the right to differ. I also have no problem with demonstrations or night vigils. It is violence that I deplore. I did have a slightly different problem, an issue which I still have not resolved in my own mind. It turns around the role of a government servant -- civilian or military -- and how to react to receiving orders with which he disagrees. Specifically, when the Secretary of State tells me, as a Foreign Service officer, that I have to go to a certain post and I disagree with the policy, what should I do? In my case, I always decided to go. The only alternative is to resign. I went from Harvard in 1970 to Vietnam. I had seen the anti-Vietnam demonstrations at home. I had been involved in the Paris negotiations on Vietnam. I ardently believed in the negotiations. I still believe today, that first and foremost, regardless who is our adversary, let us find a way of sitting down and explore whether we can find a negotiated solution. That is my profession. In my opinion, diplomacy is in part the art of trying to convince others of the mutual advantage of our policies or actions. But above all, as a Foreign Service Officer, I accept to go where the Secretary of State or the President

believes I can be of greatest service to the country. Hence, when I received orders to go to Vietnam, I went as Deputy for CORDS in Military Region One. In 1970, we had five U.S. divisions In that military region alone. Before we get into my assignment to Vietnam, I would like to express my gratitude for this year away from the "pressure cooker". I learned a lot at Harvard: how the world was changing and continues to change. Intellectual institutions look at any problem from many different points of view. There is never unanimity on any one point of view. Hence, I was willing to accept some others having a different view from mine or that of our government. Perhaps I also learned something about dissent and how to differ with my superiors. I still believe today that I owe my country the best assessment I can give, even if others disagree with my evaluation. If I differ on a policy, I believe an honest Foreign Service Officer should make it known. Silence is not an option. Personally, I did not make my career by ingratiating myself to my superiors. Many of the things I had seen and heard about in Vietnam shocked me, but I felt that, as a Foreign Service Officer, my duty was to serve the country, Just like a military officer who gets orders to go to war, I felt that if I was assigned to Vietnam to work with our military leaders, I had no choice but go - and I went in the summer of 1970. I was detailed by the Department of State to the 24th Corps in Military Region One, which was the region in the northern part of South Vietnam against the DMZ.

Q: When did you go out to Vietnam, and when did you return?

DEAN: June or July 1970, and I left Vietnam in July or August 1972.

Q: What was the situation in South Vietnam at that time when you got there?

DEAN: The South Vietnamese Government was headed by General Thieu. General Thieu had established a certain amount of political stability since the 1960s when a number of Vietnamese generals had toppled Ngo Dinh Diem and vied among themselves for power. But North Vietnam was determined to unify the country. During my period in Vietnam, the U.S. withdrew our divisions from Vietnam. We "Vietnamized" the war and left the South Vietnamese to oppose their northern countrymen. The U.S. provided the funds and weapons to the South Vietnamese military forces, as well as advisers to assist the South Vietnamese to withstand the northern drive to bring all of Vietnam under its control. We also assisted in the economic and social development of South Vietnam.

It was a privilege to work with Ambassador Bunker on the civilian side, and General Abrams and General Wyant on the military side. Ambassador Bunker's assistant was Charlie Hill. While we may not have had the same politics, we certainly had a good working relationship.

The country was governed by a group of Vietnamese dedicated to opposing militarily the expansion of North Vietnamese communism. The South Vietnamese army, navy, and air force were competent but the war had been going on for years without diminishing the will of the North to unite Vietnam under its control. In addition to the regular Vietnamese army, there were provincial forces and regional forces all over South Vietnam. These forces had American advisers. In my military region, I had 1,100 advisers. 100 of them were civilian advisers, and 1.000 were military advisers. The headquarters for Military Region One was in Danang. I moved into the house formerly used by an American admiral which was commonly referred to as the White Elephant.

Our job was to help the Vietnamese regional and provincial authorities in both military and civilian affairs. In short, I was in charge of the American advisory effort for Military Region One. But more important than our advisory effort in 1970 was the presence in our military region of five U.S. divisions. The entire U.S. effort was under the 24th Corps. The first commander of the 24th Corps in my time was a four-star Marine General, an aviator. He was followed briefly by Marine General Robinson. Then, the Army took over the Corps. Lieutenant General Sutherland was followed by Lieutenant General Dolven. My last boss was Major General Kroesen, who became a four-star General and Commander-in-chief of the U.S. Army In Europe. But by the time General Kroesen took over In late 1971, all U.S. divisions had left Vietnam and we had only an advisory function to the Vietnamese. May I add that I got to know General Kroesen very well and I think the world of this excellent soldier.

Let me say a word about my work. The position of Deputy for CORDS (Civilian Operations for Reconstruction and Development Service) to the Commander of the 24th Corps was assimilated to the rank of Major General. The person who held that position had a dedicated helicopter at his disposal. Nearly every second day of the week, DEPCORD's duty was to meet with the advisers in the field and see what was going on, and what headquarters could do to support the advisers in the field. One of the military advisers under my command was a full colonel. He was killed. He tried to land on a U.S. ship. It was he who usually briefed me in the morning, at 6:00, at my house, on what happened during the night in the military region. Our region extended from the Demarcation Line (DMZ) to the next four provinces southward, and included the city of Danang. At 7:00 a.m. was the Commanding General's briefing at the headquarters of the 24th Corps. In a U.S. military installation, about 20 minutes by car from

my house in the city of Danang. The first day I attended the Commanding General's briefing, I could not answer any questions on what had happened during the night. Thereafter, I asked one of the colonels under my command to give me a "pre-brief". I said to him: "You brief me one hour before I go to the 7:00 a.m. meeting. I don't ever want to be caught being a dummy." In the course of the 7:00 a.m. briefing, we night be told that a certain military post was overrun and the American adviser to the Vietnamese military had lost his leg, or an eye. At that point, the Commanding American General could turn to me and say: "Dean, what are you doing about it?" "Sir, I am flying up there and see whether medical help has been given, and whether I have to repatriate him or replace him. I will give you a report in the afternoon." Sometimes, it was a different kind of a problem, for example, taking care of refugees who were fleeing from violence. At one point, in 1972., Quang Tri Province, the northernmost province of South Vietnam, was completely overrun by the North Vietnamese. In the process, in April 1972. the North Vietnamese had surrounded the provincial capital where 100 American advisers were huddled together, awaiting rescue. In order to prevent our advisers being taken prisoners. I decided to fly with the helicopter dedicated to my duties to Quang Tri City and take out as many Americans as I could. I was able to take three or four trips from Danang to Quang Tri City, and every time would take seven or eight people out. On my last trip. as I was going up with American Consul Fred Brown (Frederick Z. Brown), we were shot down over Highway One, about 15 kms south of Quang Tri City. Fortunately, the rifle shot by hostile forces hit the oil line of the helicopter and not the gas line. I would not be here to relate the story because the helicopter would have exploded. Our helicopter dropped to the ground like a bag of potatoes and we hit the ground hard. We were

shook up. The helicopter could not go any further. There was a may day call, i.e. an American in distress and in need of help. Another helicopter came, under fire, to pick us up and lift us out from the spot where we had been shot down. We were taken to an installation near Hue where I asked the U.S. military whether the Vietnamese could not give us some tanks so that we could try to rescue by land the U.S. advisers for whom I was responsible. I was told that this was no longer feasible. Perhaps 24 hours later, General Hudson of the U.S. Air Force, was flown to Danang and it was from there that he organized the extraction of the remaining 50 Americans from besieged Quang Tri City. The entire operation was carried out while North Vietnamese tanks were firing into the installation. We took out not only Americans but also many South Vietnamese who had been fighting the forces from the North. The extraction by American helicopters from the beleaguered city took place at night. The pilots were so hot that they flew without clothes, except for jockey shorts. The helicopters hovered over the extraction site just long enough for the people to climb into the helicopters. There was no time to land and take off. It was also too dangerous. We got everybody out who was supposed to leave. The Vietnamese Governor of the Province and the key employees of his staff were air-lifted out to Hue.

Q: Did we have anything with which to retake Quang Tri?

DEAN: No, not at this stage. By April 1972, there were no more American military units in Vietnam. We still had aircraft which could bomb the advancing enemy and give the South Vietnamese forces an opportunity to push back the Northerners. After the fall of Quang Tri City, I was told by one of the top people in Saigon that I would not be allowed to go home until the South Vietnamese had taken back Quang Tri Province.

We did take the province back, in June 1972, and I was allowed to go home one month later.

Q: The South Vietnamese had some of their crack divisions...

DEAN: They had some excellent troops and some very good generals. They fought well on the whole. The Governor of Quang Tri was evacuated to Hué. I saw him daily and I urged him to keep his provincial administration Intact. In this way, he administered in "exile" the refugees from Quang Tri Province in Hué. Our advisers helped him by providing food, tents, and wood for cooking. Three months later, the Governor of Quang Tri was back in his province after the South Vietnamese military had retaken the province. One of the advantages I had in the 1970s was that all the Vietnamese senior military officers and civilian officials had been trained by the French and spoke rather good French. This made it easy for me to communicate with them. Most of the senior Vietnamese officers and officials were dedicated and decent. But the war had been going on for so many years that the population had become weary. The destruction was tremendous. People had been fighting since the early 1950s. Before fighting the French, there had been the Japanese occupation. Certainly, the people in the countryside were tired. The Vietnamese military had American advisers and American-supplied weapons, but the war-weariness also permeated the troops.

Not every war story relates the heroic behaviour of the valiant fighting forces. In the extraction of the surrounded Vietnamese forces and their American advisers in the Citadel of Quang Tri City, I recall the pusillanimous behaviour of an American adviser which taught me a lesson.

In Quang Tri City, in the compound in which the U.S. advisers were lodged, there remained only one air-conditioner functioning. It was April - beastly hot. That lone air-conditioner was run on a small generator and cooled down the code-room for sending messages. While all the advisers – civilian and military – regardless of rank, had to stand guard all night long, the Lt. Colonel in charge of the Advisory Unit was sleeping in the air-conditioned code-room. After the extraction, the American advisers complained about the bad example set by their leader. Shortly after the story got around, I received a phone call from the American Commander-in-Chief in Saigon. He said: "John, do you have any sons?" I replied: "Yes, I have two sons" "Would you ever want them to be serving under this lieutenant colonel?" I said: "No. This guy does not perform very well." "What are you going to do about it?" "'Well, I decided I was going to give him a bad Efficiency Rating." The Commander-in-Chief, a four-star American General, said: "John, you prefer charges against him" and he hung up. That means: have the officer court-martialed. On my staff, I had a lawyer and he drew up charges against the Lt. Colonel. The Lt. Colonel had been on the promotion list to full colonel. He was taken off the list. He was a West Pointer. His career was ended and he returned to civilian life. Under fire, the man had failed in his duties as a leader. On the whole, the American advisers were an outstanding group of able, dedicated people. But the behaviour of some of the support troops left something to be desired, especially when it came to black marketing. The advisers in the field were mostly fine soldiers and acquitted themselves with distinction.

Vietnam was a war where the American soldiers got little support from the home front. It mattered. When I came home from the Second World War on

a troop transport ship, there was a band playing at the wharf in New Jersey and young ladies with donuts and coffee came aboard to welcome the returning heroes. When I came home in 1972 from the Vietnam War, after two years and one month, there was nobody to greet you. Not only were there any festivities but nobody talked about their experiences in the Vietnam War. It was more like people wanted to forget about that chapter in our history. It took time for the folks back home to realize that the Vietnam war, like all wars, had caused hardship, wounds, and bad memories.

Q: I have to say that when I came back from Korea in 1952 or 1953, nobody was interested. You just sort of came back.

DEAN: In Korea, we had done our job and militarily it was a "draw". In Vietnam, we lost. That word, "lost", is only being used today. It was not used from 1975 until the end of the 1980s.

Let me go back to some of the outstanding work done by our American advisers to Military Region One. It also shows what CORDS , the Civil Reconstruction and Development program, was all about. Refugees by the thousands were streaming out of Quang Tri Province. They preferred fleeing to living under the communists. From Quang Tri they walked to Thua Thien Province whose capital is Hue, the imperial city of Annam. But Thua Thien was also under attack, so the refugees walked close to Danang. These refugees had nothing but their clothes on their back, or perhaps a small bundle slung on a stick over the back. The American military forces had left by that time (1972) but the neat white barracks had remained. These barracks, made of wood, were spic and span, with showers, toilets, and screens. They stood empty. So, I telephoned the American Commander-in-Chief in Saigon and said; "Sir, I intend to turn over this former American base to the Vietnamese refugees." He replied:

"John, you are in charge" and hung up. I decided that his reply was enough and I did not ask for any other opinions. I turned over the empty barracks to the refugees for lodging. Others gave them food, mostly non-governmental agencies (NGOs) from all over the world, including many American organizations. Yes, the refugees partially destroyed the barracks. As it got colder, the refugees used the wood to keep warm, and they dismantled certain buildings to obtain the wood. But I thought that the war was about people, about trying to make the refugees feel that our side cared more about people and their welfare than the other side. So, I made the decision to turn over a former U.S. military installation to the refugees coming down from Quang Tri Province. Not every military man agreed with that decision. After all, they might have preferred to turn over this facility to the Vietnamese army. I turned over another former small American installation to the refugees because they kept on coming. That installation also was partially destroyed by them.

Working with senior army flag officers helped me to learn about decision-taking. If you are the field commander, you rarely have the time to request guidance from headquarters. The decision has to be taken on the spot. The immediate situation requires action. This experience in Vietnam undoubtedly influenced me when I was faced with difficult situations in Cambodia, in Laos, in Lebanon, and in India where the tactical situation on the ground often required immediate action. In all these posts, I had to make quick decisions and my experience in Vietnam made me realize that "Time is of the essence". Take responsibility. Do it. If your superiors don't like it, they can remove you.

As I look back on my time in Vietnam during these war years, there was a sight which bothered me then, and still sticks in my mind today. Every

day, at 7:00 a.m., I had to be at the briefing of the Commander of the American military presence in MR1. A Vietnamese civilian drove me from my residence in Danang City to the headquarters of the 24th Corps. On the way to the military headquarters, I saw Vietnamese – old and young – male and female, on top of the huge mounds of leftover food from the plates of our military, searching for food, for their own consumption. They used a stick with a sharp point in their search for edible left-overs. Seeing these poor people, in the early hour mist, on top of garbage piles, with the headlights from cars bringing this picture into focus - darkness giving way to the sight of misery - made a deep impression on me. The misery caused by war is a memory I still carry with me today. One of humanity's better qualities is compassion. This experience and sentiment felt in Vietnam played a role later on in Cambodia. I found it difficult to leave the Cambodian people to a fate which I feared could be a genocide. Perhaps this sense of compassion is one of the differences between Dr. Kissinger and myself on the Cambodian tragedy. Perhaps I don't see the entire global picture as those in charge in Washington, but I do see the suffering humanity and I am affected. I am on the spot. Is that one of the differences between a field commander and his superior sitting in an office far, far away?

Q: Did you have any contact or get any feel for what was going on in Washington?

DEAN: No.

Q: Was it just a different world?

DEAN: I had very little knowledge of what was going on outside of Vietnam, except from reading the Army newspaper. I felt I had a job to do in Vietnam, and people had confidence in me. I tried to do my best. I saw

things in war which were despicable. I also saw acts of great bravery, or ordinary people just doing their job -- Vietnamese and Americans alike. Let me recite another experience which will underline the importance of good leadership. Back in 1970. when we still had American divisions in Vietnam, I was up in Quang Tri Province when I saw an American tank column coming out of an incursion from Laos. As they came out of Laos, they were surprised in Quang Tri Province by North Vietnamese troops who pursued them,. When tanks are in danger of being captured, the soldiers get out of the tanks and run toward friendly lines in the hope of saving their lives. I happened to have been there, standing in back of the American Brigadier General speaking to American troops, when they arrived in a safe area. He said: "Men, you go back and get these tanks. These tanks are going to turn against us. We can't afford to have our tanks in the hands of our enemy. Go and get them !" The answer of the troops was: "General, up yours I Go and get them yourself !" The man was relieved of his command. What he should have done was: "Men, follow me. I am going to lead you. We've got to get our tanks back. We can't let the enemy take over these tanks in good condition and use them against us. Follow me, men ! " I have tried to apply this lesson in my role as leader of a team: Lead by setting a good example.

Q: Did you find at this point of the war that the American military, particularly at the troop level, was beginning to not disintegrate, but there were a whole series of things, including...

DEAN: You did have fragging. I was aware of that.

Q: You might explain what fragging is.

DEAN: Fragging is throwing a grenade from the rear, usually against an

officer who is disliked by the troops. It's using explosives to eliminate a member of your own team. What I noticed in Military Region One was that most soldiers were counting the days until their tour of duty would come to an end. The average American soldier in a fox-hole was alone with his buddy in an isolated advanced position, and he acquitted himself with valor and a sense of duty. They were in my mind great guys. I also had under my command young Foreign Service Officers on their first tour of duty, assigned to some out of the way district in Thua Thien Province, or in the hills of Quang Nam Province, etc... Many a night, these distant, isolated districts came under attack by the North Vietnamese or the Viet Cong. How many of these young men, assigned to help in rural development, education, and hygiene, came under attack at night? Was this the kind of duty they expected when they had entered the U.S. Foreign Service? I have the greatest respect for these young FSOs at the time. They learned about leadership, how to set an example. Some of them are today ambassadors. They did not sign up for that kind of hazardous duty in Vietnam. Nonetheless, the Foreign Service officers assigned to CORDS in Vietnam carried out duties far removed from what is generally associated with traditional diplomacy. When I had to fly to some distant field hospital and decorate an adviser who had lost an eye or a limb, I understood the meaning of "duty" and "service to your country".

I liked the Vietnamese people and I had a good relationship with their leadership. The South Vietnamese were beginning to worry - "Are we being seen as the stalking horse of the Americans? "Are the North Vietnamese painting us South Vietnamese, as collaborators?" I still wear today, with some pride, cufflinks given to me by General Thieu when I finished my tour of duty in Vietnam. I was asked by Ambassador Bunker to go to the Presidential Palace in Saigon, and I was awarded a

number of Vietnamese medals for my service in Vietnam.

Another realization I gained during my years with the military in Vietnam was that war hurts mostly civilians. I also gained the impression that most American generals don't engage troops lightly and prefer a negotiated solution to war. Senior military officers know what it means to ask soldiers to risk their lives. Politicians very often don't take sufficiently into account the results of violence and war, both on our soldiers and on the civilians of our enemy. The experiences I gained in Vietnam were very useful for me in the positions which I was about to receive for the next 20 years.

Q: In Vietnam, who was the head military commander while you were there?

DEAN: General Abrams. Years later, I went to his funeral in Washington. He was an excellent chief, indeed. Once a month, the top brass, including the 4 Depcords, assembled in Saigon to be briefed and to exchange views on what was going on in the four military regions. General Abrams presided. On occasion, he could be very outspoken with those who may have made a mistake, even with other top generals under his command. General Abrams was also a very private person. Sometimes, late at night, he would listen to classical music. He was one of the best.

He was replaced by Freddy Wyant. His style was different. He was less aloof than Abrams. We got to be friends and stayed in touch for many years. He was in charge when the Quang Tri invasion occurred and we worked together closely during that period. He came often to Military Region One and he was still in charge when South Vietnamese troops retook Quang Tri Province in July 1972. I learned from General Wyant that when

you are in charge, that means you must take the decision and you are held responsible for the result. Often, he would say: "Don't come to me for advice. I have confidence in you. Do what is necessary." That style of leadership helped me to do what I-did later in Laos. Not everybody appreciated that kind of leadership. I remember, I was reprimanded in Laos by the Secretary of State for answering the Prime Minister's question when he asked for advice, for not referring the question back to Washington. I assume that Washington was afraid that I might give advice which was not "politically correct". We will discuss it in our discussion on Laos.

Q: I would like to know a little more how you operated. You are saying the young Foreign Service officers were performing well -- the Foreign Service officers assigned to CORDS.

DEAN: Very well.

Q: I assume that you flew by helicopter to the outlying districts where the young FSOs were stationed?

DEAN: Yes. We only had advisers -- civilian and military -- in regions under South Vietnamese Government control. Certain areas in South Vietnam were written off to the Viet Cong and obviously there were no South Vietnamese Government presence there, nor American advisers.

Q: Basically though, it was really the North Vietnamese who controlled areas in MR1 not under South Vietnamese Government control, wasn't it?

DEAN: Whether you call them North Vietnamese or Viet Cong does not really matter. There was some support in the outlying districts for Hanoi's struggle to unite Vietnam, for nationalism and for ending fighting which had lasted for a couple of decades. Our FSO advisers tried to help the

districts to improve the conditions of life of the poor farmers. For example, young officers in a small district or in a small town would say: " I am going to get you some seeds to grow some corn." Or they might say: "I can get you some lumber so that you can repair your house." Or "We will get you some pigs to diversify your farming." They might have a literacy program, I recall that during my tenure in MR1, CORDS helped to keep functioning the University of Hue. After the 1968 debacle in Hue, we helped the Vietnamese rector and professors to reopen the university. Final examinations were being given at Hué University during the fall of Quang Tri Province, in 1972. The graduation of a new group of civilians students was essential to the future of Central Vietnam. Our CORDS advisers helped the university teachers to supervise the exams, provide security, and make the university function. We received an award of gratitude from the University for our assistance.

Q: You spent quite a bit of time flying out and talking with the senior officials of the region.

DEAN: A great deal. I visited regularly the 4 provinces under CORDS control. I also worked closely with the major urban centers. Danang was a relatively important port and the hub of Central Vietnam. During my tenure in Central Vietnam, I received an instruction from Washington to protect the famous Cham Museum, The message said that President Nixon had received a request from Phillip Stern, curator of the Guimet Museum in Paris, asking the U.S. to ascertain that the Cham Museum in Danang would not be destroyed nor damaged, as the museum in Hué was in 1968. With the U.S. advisers to the Mayor of Danang, I went to look at the Cham Museum.. I learned that the museum was entirely dedicated to the preservation of Cham art. The Chams were carriers of Hindu influence which is reflected in their sculptures and their temples. Their art is

similar to the sculptures at Borobudur in Indonesia. Cham temples can still be seen in Central and South Vietnam. The Danang Cham Museum is an open air structure - the building has a roof, but is open on at least one side. Every item in the museum is locked into a wall with a steel rod. Hence, with metal rods, the art pieces could not be stolen. This museum survived entirely intact. I asked the mayor to send a military detachment to the museum to protect it from greedy traders cutting off heads of the sculptures for resale abroad. A group of soldiers was assigned to guard the Cham Museum in Danang. Today, that museum is one of the great tourist attraction of Vietnam. It is certainly the most outstanding museum of that particular art form in the world. In 1999, the French published a guide book with reproductions of each artifact in the Cham Museum and offered thousands of volumes to the Danang Museum to be sold to tourists. In the foreword, there is specific mention of President Nixon's Instruction to the American authorities to help protect this unique museum.

Q: At the Danang level, how did you find dealing with the Vietnamese Commander? Was General Lon still there? I have heard from other people that General Lon was more a political general and had large warehouses full of his stuff. In other words, a lot of corruption there. Did you find this?

DEAN: I am quite sure that there were abuses. As for the general you mention, I was in Vietnam to help the South Vietnamese to withstand North Vietnamese efforts to topple the Saigon regime. I tried to understand and work with South Vietnamese civilian and military officials. They had mostly been French-trained and spoke fluent French. They came from a rather privileged class of people. Their wives sometimes used the position of their husbands to increase their material well-being. Some generals were less action-oriented than others. Some of the senior military officials also had second thoughts about how they were perceived by their own people so as not to be seen as "puppets of Americans".

We could at times be quite heavy-handed by wanting to run the show by ourselves. This tendency obviously changed after the American military units had left Vietnam. Perhaps the general you referred to was a more cautious person. The general In charge of Thua Thien was a very scrappy general who led his troops himself. Some Vietnamese military In 1972 were also asking themselves If perhaps this war was not going to lead to a victory, would the Americans stand by them In time of difficulty? It's easy to say "He did not fight hard enough", especially If he is sitting In a very comfortable easy chair in Danang or in Saigon. I once received a book which was dedicated to me with the words "We manned the walls of freedom together". Yes, I was in the front lines on the ground, having my windows shot out, some times being physically targeted by the adversary. The man who dedicated this book to me was sitting in a comfortable office back home, thousands of miles away from the military confrontation. I am sure he worried a great deal, but It is not the same when you are In the field facing physical danger. You asked about General Lon and the Vietnamese generals. Some were good generals. Some may have had sticky fingers. But we had our own problems among American soldiers. Let me cite the example of my own orderly. Three out of four of my orderlies were punished for abuse of my commissary privileges. I cannot change others, but I tried to be a worthy representative of the United States. Setting a good example was more Important to me than pointing fingers at others.

Q: Were we concerned about the generals - the reputation was there of General Lon, who was spending more time aggrandizing his personal fortune than leading... Was that a concern?

DEAN: Definitely. It was also a concern later on in Cambodia, trying to shore up the military to do the fighting. But as time went on -- and

that is the difference between being a field commander and being a political observer – you see it differently when you are on the ground than when you are back in Washington looking at the global picture and wonder how it fits into the relationship with the Soviet Union or with China. Colonel Jacobson, who was the Deputy Head of CORDS, was a legend. He was a tough, likeable colonel who thought our mission was to have South Vietnam win. I came to CORDS with a reputation of being a negotiator. If I could have negotiated, I would have negotiated. But I could not. I was merely a small cog in a big wheel. But I always asked myself – and that was going to be a leitmotif in different periods of my life -- on whose side is time. I fear that some policy makers misread that terribly. All I can say, I had great respect for all those who carried out their duty with candor, strength and determination. There were abuses, yes. There were abuses by Vietnamese and perhaps also by some Americans, but that is focusing on the warts.

Q: I am trying to touch various elements, including the overall picture and the warts.

DEAN: The overall picture was that in 1972 you could see a certain battle fatigue setting in both in the United States where the war demonstrators got more vocal, where people in Congress were beginning to criticize our policy as for example Senators Church and Kennedy, and in Vietnam where some elements were beginning to question whether President Thieu could withstand Hanoi's efforts to take over the whole country.

Before leaving the subject of Vietnam, I would like to say a word about a great American: Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker. He was a fine human being, a great patriot, who saw the picture accurately. He was not afraid to

criticize our military on "body count". He was not afraid to send candid messages to Washington in which he set forth his doubts about certain policies. Would we be loyal to our friends and allies to the end? I thought Ambassador Bunker, who came up to Danang quite often, was a loyal supporter of our policy, although he probably saw problems ahead. Ambassador Bunker knew whatever he was doing was for his country and not for his own glory.

Q: How did you work with the Political Section in Saigon? They would send their gallopers out to...

DEAN: I had very little contact; practically none with the Political Section in Saigon. We had a Consulate in Danang and that was its function.

Q: I was going to ask about the Consulate. Who were Consuls when you were there?

DEAN: I knew two. Fred Z. Brown and Terry McNamara. I had a perfectly good relationship, but their role was largely as observers for Embassy Saigon. CORDS officers were supposed to be doers. As I said earlier, Fred Z. Brown was in my helicopter when we both got shot down. Terry McNamara was a brave officer who later went on to become Depcords in Military Region Four where he made a name for himself.

Q: Did you ever run across John Paul Van?

DEAN: I worked with him. I also went to his funeral. I knew his girlfriend very well.

Q: Which one?

DEAN: who was there when he died.

Q: Were you...

DEAN: I saw him regularly once a month at the briefing session in Saigon. He was a strong personality, a military man with strong convictions about our role in Vietnam. He was in Two Corps, which was a particularly difficult region because most of the Hill Tribes lived in that area. Keeping the Hill Tribes from supporting the North Vietnamese and have them handled in a way that they would support the government in Saigon was a challenging task. John Paul Van was certainly the most recognized personality in the CORDS program by the media for his outstanding service.

Q: Were the Koreans gone by the time you left?

DEAN: No. We had Koreans, but they were not in I-CORPS. We had two Australian advisers who received the Victoria Medal in our region. That was prior to my arrival in Vietnam.

Q: I think this is a good place to stop for today. We will pick it up next time with where you went in 1972.

DEAN: In 1972, I was asked to be Deputy Chief of Mission of the largest Mission at the time in the U.S. Foreign Service: Laos. I had the honor and privilege to work with Mac Godley, one of the "field marshals" who enjoyed his position of great power and making military decisions. When Mac asked me "John, what do you take, the war or peace?" I said: "I think I am better qualified for peace". It was in Laos that I was able to achieve a peaceful solution to a war.

Q: All right. We will pick this up then.

Q: Today is September 9, 2000. One question I meant to ask about your time up in I-CORPS. Did you have much to do with the "Montagnards", the hill people there, and how did they fit into the equation?

DEAN: The answer is. Military Region One did not have many Montagnards. They were in Military Region Two and Three, John Paul Van really had the Montagnards problem. It was in that area that he did some of his best work. We did have some Cham temples west of Thua Thien, but that area was at that time already Viet Cong territory.

Q: Didn't you have some resettlement from...

DEAN: The people from Hue were resettled. They were obviously Vietnamese.

Q: A friend of mine, Fred Elfers, was in I-CORPS. He took me up and showed me a fishing village where they had taken people from the interior to settle as refugees along the coast.

DEAN: We did have refugees because of the fighting, but they were not, on the whole, the minority tribes. Hill Tribes in Vietnam were racially completely different from the Vietnamese.

Q: "Vietnam" means "Southern Viets" doesn't it?

DEAN: That's right. By the way. South Vietnam, formerly known as Cochinchina, was taken over by the Vietnamese from the Cambodians. When we supported Marshal Long Nol's government in Cambodia, we helped raise a whole division in South Vietnam of ethnically Cambodian people to fight for Cambodia. The Vietnamese moving south from Tonkin only reached the tip of South Vietnam about the year 1800.

Q: Let's move on to Laos.

DEAN: When I arrived in Laos in the autumn of 1972, I had a long conversation with Ambassador MacGodley. By that time, I had the reputation of being a "fighter". Embassy/Vientiane was a huge Mission of 680 Americans. Mac Godley was a person who inspired loyalty. He, in turn, reciprocated with full support for his staff. He believed in the doctrine that we should put as much military pressure as possible on the Pathet Lao and their Vietnamese supporters, especially through aerial bombing. In the course of this meeting, Mac asked me: "Do you wish to take the war or peace?" I took the peace. Had I opted for "the war", it would have meant selecting targets, for bombing by American planes, and supporting the CIA efforts with the Meo mercenaries fighting the Vietnamese. There was a whole section in Embassy/Vientiane that was involved in selecting targets for bombings by the U.S. Air Force. Bombing helped to push Pathet Lao troops off a hilltop or giving support to the Royal Lao Army units facing the enemy. We had a very close relationship with the Lao military. When I arrived in Vientiane in 1972, a Pathet Lao delegation had just arrived in town to explore the possibility of negotiations. So, when I took over the role of following, for the Embassy, efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Lao conflict, I was lucky, as far as timing was concerned.

Q: Excuse me. You were there from 1972 to when?

DEAN: Until October/November 1973. One of the reasons the Pathet Lao delegation had arrived in Vientiane was that the leader of the Pathet Lao was Souphana Vong, who was the half brother of Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma, who was very much committed to finding a way of ending the armed conflict. The presence of Souvanna Phouma as Head of the Royal Lao Government was probably the reason that we were able to help find a negotiated solution in Laos. In Cambodia, unlike Laos, there was no

major local personality in the country with whom you could negotiate or who was a credible neutralist leader. Souvanna Phouma was known as a neutralist, and proud to be one. In an earlier Interview, I had discussed the personal links I had with him. Since I came back to Vientiane, this time as Deputy Chief of Mission, my wife and I were invited quite often in the evening to the Prime Minister's home. Dinner was usually followed by bridge. Souvanna Phouma was an avid bridge player and he liked to win. If by 11:00 p.m. he had won, we went home at 11:15. But if Souvanna Phouma was losing, we stayed on until 1:00 a.m., until he started winning. These social occasions gave me an opportunity of discussing in a leisurely manner the problems of the day. Since Souvanna Phouma was an avowed neutralist, he did not really enjoy the enthusiastic support of the United States. Most of the time, Souvanna Phouma was interested in exploring solutions which saved face for both Lao parties.

Q: In 1961 or 1962, what had been the solution at that point?

DEAN: Back in those days, Mr. Harriman worked with the neutralist General Phoumi Nong Savan. Back in 1962, Lao neutralists were more acceptable to the U.S. You must remember. Secretary Dulles was no longer on the scene. Certainly, by 1972, Souvanna Phouma had emerged as a compromise figure on the Lao political scene. The French gave him full support. I am also inclined to believe that the Russians supported the coming of the Pathet Lao to Vientiane in order to find an alternative to the war. The Pathet Lao official who was sent to Vientiane as Head of the Delegation was Phoumi Vong Vichit who later became President of Laos.

A word about the other important players on the Lao side, in this crucial period. One of them was the King of Laos. You may remember that he had

gone to school with my late Father-in-law, when the former was the Crown Prince. When we went to Luang Prabang, this made some difference in my relationship with him. The King was a mild-mannered person, while his son, the Crown Prince, was prone to act at times high handedly. Both the Lao Dynasty in Luang Prabang and the Princes of Champasak in Southern Laos had links, not only to France, but also to Thailand. In Southern Laos, Prince Boon Oum had fought the Japanese during the Second World War, and after the war served briefly as Prime Minister of Laos. Prince Boon Oum, a huge man, was basically a country gentleman, not terribly well educated, but he loved the good things in life: booze, beautiful women, and having a good time. I had been told that when he came to Paris as Prime Minister, he was supposed to meet with the President of France. On his way to the meeting, he had met a nice-looking floozie so he just forgot about his appointment with the President of France. His nephew Sisouk Champasak played an important role in Laos in the 1960s and 1970s, and was quite pro-American.

Q: When you say "we", I assume your wife was with you.

DEAN: Oh yes. She always played a very major role. Her family was known to Souvanna Phouma. By 1972, his children were grown up. One was in the military. Another was in business. His very attractive daughter, Moun, had attended prestigious schools in France. Later, she married an American. Perry Stieglitz, who was in the U.S. Embassy. She was a very refined, beautiful lady. She also had a sister who worked with NGOs.

General Kouprasith was the Head of the Royal Lao Armed Forces. Among his accomplishments, is the building of the Arch of Triumph in Vientiane, which every tourist visits today. He was the son of the Head of the King's

Council, the senior position of the Lao civilian administration. He had spent many years In school in France. By the time I returned to Laos in 1972, he was an old man. But with that family we also had close links going back to earlier years. We had spent tine with them at their family hone in southern Laos. Nearly all Lao officials spoke French, in addition to their native Lao language which is very close to the Thai language. If we wanted to communicate with the key Lao personalities -- civilian or military -- it was essential in those days to be able to speak French. Ambassador Godley spoke good French, and most of the Embassy staff spoke French. We also had a few Thai-speaking officers.

On the American side. I would like to single out Jack Vessey. He was a Brigadier General at the time. He was in charge of providing our Mission with military support, out of Udorn in northern Thailand. This entailed providing military hardware and military intelligence to the Royal Lao forces. Jack and I became good friends. On a number of occasions, we traveled together in his plane, visiting the Royal Lao Armed Forces or the Meo Hill Tribes fighting the Vietnamese who were supported by the Central Intelligence Agency. One day. Jack and I were on the Plaine des Jarres, in northeastern Laos, when suddenly we came under intense artillery shelling from the Pathet Lao, supported by the North Vietnamese. The artillery shelling was pretty precise. Jack Vessey and I were forced to lock arms and jump together into a ditch to avoid being hit by enemy artillery shelling. Jack was a very thoughtful person. In the hours we spent in his plane traveling, we would discuss the role of the United States in Indochina, in Asia, and In the world. Among the many American military I had the honor of working with. Jack was tops. Later, he served with distinction as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

It was In 1971 that I started working closely with Peng Pongsavan who was the President of the Lao National Assembly. He had been selected by the King and by Souvanna Phouma to be the negotiator for the Royal Lao Government side. On the Pathet Lao side, was Phoumi Vang Vichit. The two Lao delegations met during the daytime and tried to find compromises to their opposing views. In the evenings, usually after 10:00 p.m., I went over to see Peng Pongsavan to obtain a read-out on the status of the negotiations. Armed with many notes, I returned to the Embassy to send a detailed message to our National Security Advisor on the status of the negotiations to find an end to the Lao conflict. My message was not sent always through the State Department channels, but directly to the White House. i.e., the Security Adviser.

Q: This would be Henry Kissinger at this point.

DEAN: You are right. That was Henry Kissinger. He came to Laos quite often as part of his trips to Vietnam. In Vientiane, I would act as his interpreter. Although Dr. Kissinger speaks good French, he preferred to speak in English and I would interpret. Vice-versa, when Souvanna Phouma spoke, he would ask for a translation. This way, both men had time to prepare their replies.

Q: At this time, when you were hearing this, how did we feel about the outcome of this? We were saying "This is not acceptable" or were we willing to sit back and say...

DEAN: I received practically no guidance from Washington and I was very much on my own. It should also be noted that in March 1973 Ambassador Godley had left post for a new assignment and I was left in charge for the next 6 months. Souvanna Phouma's neutralism was not our preferred solution.

Yet, Washington was eager to receive a read out on the status of the negotiations. Often, Peng Pongsavan, the Royal Lao Government negotiator, would ask: "What do you think about this compromise or that approach?" I did not have time to ask the Department for guidance. I would give my opinion, suggesting: "Maybe this approach might work." In a way, I was part of the negotiation by extension and the faith Peng Pongsavan had, that I reflected the official view of Washington. Sometimes, Peng Pongsavan would ask: "Do you think this is acceptable?" (presumably to Washington). I would say: "If it leads to a settlement, yes." We both knew that the outcome of the negotiation would have to be a coalition government. That means sharing power with the Pathet Lao. By 1972, Laos was no longer perceived by Washington as a bi-lateral problem but rather as part of a much broader U.S. effort to contain the spread of communism in South-East Asia, and that entailed all 3 former Indochina states of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

Q: The Soviets were involved.

DEAN: The Soviets had been involved in Laos for some time. You will recall that Governor Harriman had fortunately found a solution supporting the neutralists in the early 1960s, with General Phoumi Pongsavan. In 1972 - 1973, the Soviet Ambassador to Laos was definitely in favour of a compromise solution for Laos. That basically meant supporting a denouement to the conflict by the formation of a coalition government with the Pathet Lao. In my nightly reporting, I had the help of a very dedicated Foreign Service secretary who would come to the office at midnight in order to type up the message to Washington. Before that, Dick Howland, an excellent FSO who later became ambassador, was my political chief and he was also at the office in the middle of the night to ensure that the message was perfect.

Q: Dick has almost a photographic memory. He knows all the Lao names.

DEAN: Dick would come in and be sure that what I had drafted was coherent and I had used the right words. He was an excellent wordsmith. Again, I would like to state that all chiefs stand on the shoulders of their team.

Q: Using the military terms, the wiring diagram gets rather important - who reports to whom. Here you are, a Foreign Service Officer. I can see sending something to the National Security Adviser, but we did have a Secretary of State and the whole thing there. This was the main focus of our foreign policy at the time in Indochina. Where did you get your orders from to do it this way, and how did this work?

DEAN: Basically, I got answers to my reports from the National Security Adviser, Dr. Kissinger. He came from time to time to Vientiane, on his way to Vietnam. It was quite clear that I was expected to address my messages to the National Security Adviser. On my staff of 680 Americans, more than half were involved either in support of the Meo Hill Tribes fighting the communists, or different American Intelligence Agencies gathering information to support our effort to oppose the spreading of communism. In addition to a number of CIA officers, we also had at our post Army Intelligence, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the Drug Enforcement Agency. In Washington, the only place where all this information was coordinated was in the Office of the National Security Adviser. At the post, the coordinator was the Ambassador, or in his absence, the Chargé d'Affaires,

One day. something happened which was written up in detail in "Time Magazine", "Newsweek", and the international press. My nice boss. Ambassador Mac Godley, was asked in February 1973 to become Assistant Secretary of State for Asian Affairs, in Washington. This was an important job where he was also going to be in charge of the Indochina problem. It was also a vote

to keep on fighting and continue aerial bombing as an essential part in using military pressure to find a solution.

Q: The bombing was basically against the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

DEAN: Not always. The bombing could be in the Plaine des Jarres which had nothing to do with the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The American bombing was often directed against a hilltop where the Pathet Lao had displaced the Royal Lao Government Forces. The idea was to get them off the hill and have the friendly forces retake the hill. This was also a time when some vocal reservations were expressed in Congress about bombing. Some Congressmen even urged stopping the air operations altogether. Back in Washington, MacGodley's designation as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs ran into difficulties in the Senate. Instead of being confirmed for the Washington assignment, his name was proposed for the Ambassadorship to Lebanon. With Godley's departure from Vientiane in early 1973, I became Chargé d'Affaires, a position I held for 6 months, until a new ambassador arrived at post.

The official orders we had at that time were clear: support the government of Souvanna Phouma. We supported the Royal Lao Government, and I followed these instructions scrupulously. Souvanna Phouma and this policy were going to be put to a test. In August 1973, General Tao Ma, a Lao dissident Air Force General, sneaked across the Mekong River and occupied the Vientiane Airport. He was supported by a group of dissident Lao military officers who had come from northern Thailand in an effort to topple the neutralist government of Souvanna Phouma. That group of coup plotters undoubtedly had the support of some branches of the U.S. Government and also perhaps the support of Asian countries which opposed the neutralist

policies of Prince Souvanna Phouma. After they had also taken control of the Vientiane Radio Station, they went on the air to alert the public that their mission was to evict Souvanna Phouma from power. They took full control of the Vientiane Airport and control tower, and wanted to use the small American-supplied military planes given to the Royal Lao Air Force, to subdue the Souvanna Phouma Government and force the Royal Lao Government to turn over the government to them.

When I was notified of this development, I first found a safe house for Souvanna Phouma, and he was out of harm's way. I then had my driver take me to the Airport to confront the coup plotters. I then tried to organize Americans to help me to put down the coup, but all of them saw their role as reporters or observers. My staff was very generous in writing up the events. One of them was Frank Franco who was in charge of fire security at the airport. Colonel Bailey, the Military Attaché, was equally active in keeping abreast of developments, but was reluctant to be directly involved in defending the Prime Minister or putting down the illegal coup d' état hatched outside Laos.

Q: What was Frank Franco's position?

DEAN: He was involved with the airport.

Q: Was he in the CIA?

DEAN; I don't know. I think he was on the AID payroll. All I can say is that he was a very hard working and a very devoted person who took the time to write an 18-page report on the coup attempt. It said exactly what happened. I felt pretty much alone in crushing the coup.

When we arrived by car at the airport, I got a bull-horn and, standing below the Airport Control Tower, I shouted in French to the coup plotters: "Go back across the Mekong. If you are not going to go back, I'm going to cut off the gasoline supplies and all other items needed by the Lao military and provided by the U.S. Get out of here! My job is to support the Government of Prince Souvanna Phouma and this coup is against this government. I will not have you undermine the legal and internationally recognized Lao Government !" Nobody moved, except some plotters who were getting the small military propeller-powered planes ready to fly over the city and take over the government. So, I asked my driver to drive the car to the middle of the runway in order to block the planes from taking off. I sat in the car with my chauffeur. The latter was shivering with fear He wanted to get out. I said: "You stay here. I am staying in the car with you. Put the flags on the car." The two flags (the American flag and the Presidential flag) were flying on the car and we were blocking the runway. Well, General Tao Ma was not going to be put off by this show of bravado by a young civilian officer. He fired up his plane and he tried to take off. Since I was about midway on the airstrip, he tried to avoid the car. He did not have enough height. In the process of avoiding a collision with my car, he veered off to the right and crashed. He was killed instantly. I must admit that at that point, I was also a little shaky myself. So, I told the driver: "Let's go back to the Control Tower." There, I took my bull-horn again and shouted: "Get your buts back over the Mekong River ! This thing is over !" At that point, there was a Royal Lao Army detachment waiting near the airport for the outcome of this confrontation. Sisouk Na Champasak, the Lao Minister of Defense, and a good friend, was heading the troops, but he was still waiting to see how this struggle was going to end. Was it going to be neutralist Souvanna Phouma or hard liners? At that point, a putschist colonel, second in command to General Tao Ma, took off by plane and left for across the Mekong River. The rest of the

coup plotters followed by boat. Finally, seeing the failure of the coup plotters, the Royal Lao military detachment decided to move and take control of the airport. The coup was over!

Q: They went where?

DEAN: They went back to Thailand. This was the last attempt to stop the negotiations for a coalition government which would bring the Pathet Lao out of the bush and into the Royal Lao Government.

Q: You are talking about Royal Lao Forces in Thailand. They came across the Mekong.

DEAN: But these were rebellious officers who had taken refuge in Thailand.

Q: Had they been sitting in Thailand? You mentioned that maybe there was some tacit support within the U.S. Government for this.

DEAN: There was a major U.S. support operation in Udorn, in northeastern Thailand to assist the Royal Lao Armed Forces and the Royal Government. I think enough books have been written about it. General Tao Ma was an officer in rebellion against the political leadership of Prince Souvanna Phouma. He and his coup plotters could not have undertaken this entire operation unless they had support from other well organized foreign groups. There is no doubt that there existed at the time elements on the American and Thai sides who opposed the neutralist policies of Souvanna Phouma. My instructions were very clear; to support the government of Souvanna Phouma. I was there to carry out that policy. I did not have time to ask for guidance from Washington or from anybody else. In any case, had the coup plotters succeeded in their takeover, there would have been elements in the U.S. who would have blamed me for failing to support

Souvanna Phouma, and others for trying to stop the plotters from doing what was needed to stop Laos' sliding toward communism. I thought I was carrying out the official U.S. policy and I threw my own life in the balance to achieve our objective. Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma was now free to continue his efforts to bring the war to an end through negotiations. My superiors in Washington were generous in praising my actions. There were undoubtedly factions back home who regretted that the coup had failed.

While most of the action centered around the airport, I also had to think about the safety of the Pathet Lao delegation who had come to Vientiane for the negotiations and who lived in a large house in town. Knowing that these Pathet Lao negotiators were very much a target of the coup plotters, I asked some of the American Marines guarding our Embassy to send a few marines to the Pathet Lao house to protect them against those who wanted to harm them. After General Tao Ma was dead and after all coup participants had fled across the border, I went over to the Pathet Lao Delegation where its chief negotiator, Phoumi Vong Vichit, thanked me for the protection. The Pathet Lao Delegation members and their American protectors all joined in a glass of sparkling wine, the closest thing to Champagne, to celebrate the success of our intervention. The road for a negotiated solution was free. The Pathet Lao Delegation members understood that their lives had been In the balance if this coup had succeeded.

At that point, we continued working with the two negotiators, Peng Pongsavan for the Royal Lao Government, and Phoumi Vong Vichit for the Pathet Lao. They signed the famous Protocol which opened the door to a coalition government a few weeks after the aborted coup. On October 18, 1973, I received a personal, signed, letter from the President of the United States

which reads as follows
:

"Dear John,

You have my warm congratulations and my sincere thanks for the outstanding contribution you made to this successful completion of the Lao Protocol which was signed on September 14. You are far more than an observer and a reporter of the events leading up to the agreement. You also played a vital role as mediator and catalyst earning the respect and admiration of all the parties. You vigorously and skillfully represented the United States and thus helped fulfill the earnest desire of the American people to advance the cause of peace for the people of Indochina and the world.

Sincerely,

Richard Nixon"

We never broke relations with Laos after 1975 when we left Vietnam and Cambodia. Christian Chapman was then in charge of our Embassy in Vientiane and he and Charlie Whithouse knew how to build on what we had accomplished.

Q: I have an interview with him.

DEAN: Christian Chapman and Ambassador Whithouse did an excellent job in honing our links with Laos. We never broke diplomatic relations with Laos, even during and after the withdrawal of all American presence from Vietnam and Cambodia in 1975. There was no genocide in Laos. Unlike Vietnam and Cambodia, there was no mass killings in Laos. A few people went to "reeducation camps" after 1975. Others fled to Thailand or the U.S., or France. A coalition government was formed in the autumn of 1973, Then my very good friend Ambassador Charles Whithouse took charge of the American Embassy. The new Lao Government included Pathet Lao and Royal Government ministers under the leadership of Souvanna Phouma.

One day, Souvanna Phouma called at his home a meeting of all the ambassadors and chiefs of mission in Vientiane. At that occasion, he publicly thanked me for the constructive role I had played in helping to bring about a peaceful negotiated solution to a long conflict between the Royal Government of Laos and the Pathet Lao. In my long career which was to follow, it was one of the great moments in my life, having been instrumental in helping people find a controlled, negotiated solution rather than continuing military confrontation where I felt then and later, time was not on our side. This particular aspect of time is repeated in many messages which came out of Vientiane. Let me give you an example of some of the anecdotes. At one point as we were very close to a conclusion in a negotiated solution, the Pathet Lao had pushed the Royal Government off a hilltop and they, in turn, occupied the hilltop. They had broken the cease-fire agreement. Whereupon Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma called me and said: "John, should I call for a B-52 air strike?" At this time, there were no more regular air strikes and I told the Prime Minister: "If we have an air strike, we will kill the Pathet Lao on the top of the hill. They would be off the top of the hill and the Royal Lao Army would reoccupy that hilltop. But I fear that one week later, the Pathet Lao would come back and expell the Royal Lao Army from the hilltop. We would be back at the same point. Personally. I would not break the cease-fire on the B-52 raids just for this small incident. We are so close to the negotiation of a Lao coalition government which would end the hostilities that I would recommend that you do not call for an air strike." Before executing an air strike by American bombers we usually had to have the prior approval of the Prime Minister. I went back to the Embassy and reported this conversation by telegram through State Department channels. In return. I received an official reprimand from the Secretary of State, which is in my Foreign Service file, for not having asked for instructions from the State Department. I still believe that, when you are in the kitchen,

you have not always got the time to ask the big chief how to handle an immediate problem. You just do your best.

Q: While we are on the subject of bombings, in the first place, you mentioned sometime back that we had tried the bombing pause. Could you explain what the effect of that was as a try-on? After Godley left, were you picking up the bombing side of things?

DEAN: By the summer of 1973 bombing by U.S. aircraft in Laos had stopped for all practical purposes. Public pressure in the United States and the opposition by a number of Senators and Congressmen had severely reduced B-52 strikes in Laos. Many legislators had come to Laos and seen for themselves that the bombing was a two-edged sword. While it may have saved a particular military situation for the moment, quite often it turned the local civilian population into violent opponents of the United States. This also happened in Cambodia. It is difficult to explain to the little guys on the ground that suddenly they get bombed, their cattle gets killed, and they have personal losses, but that this destruction carried out by a foreign nation is in the overall interests of the country. Not all bombs hit their target. The bombing halt undoubtedly helped me to negotiate the settlement in Laos. Had bombing been resumed, it would have been tantamount to admitting that negotiations had failed and did not lead to an end of hostilities.

Q: While the negotiations were going on, you had your 600-odd Americans there, many of whom were involved in supporting the war effort. We had Thai troops in there, in Laotian uniforms. We had tribesmen. In a way, this whole apparatus was geared for war. Here you were, trying to negotiate a peace. For some of these people, war was their profession, including the Americans. I would have thought it would be a little hard to reign them in.

DEAN: When you negotiate, you also have to have some way of putting pressure on your adversary to promote your point of view in the negotiations.

I made a distinction between U.S./Thai support for Meo Hill Tribes fighting themselves against the Pathet Lao/North Vietnam, and the Royal Lao Armed Forces opposing the Pathet Lao. The support for the Meo was handled exclusively by the Central Intelligence Agency. Quite often, I joined my CIA colleagues in visits to Meo villages to better understand what was the situation on the ground. But in serious negotiations, one can do two things simultaneously: fight and negotiate. I put the emphasis on negotiation. My analysis at that point was that time was not on the side of the Royal Lao Government in pursuing warfare, and therefore I placed my emphasis on moving rapidly on negotiations.

Q: Could you talk about Henry Kissinger when he came and some other government officials? There must have been a lot of consultation. Did Henry Kissinger share with you the idea that time was not on our side?

DEAN: No. On that issue, we did not see eye to eye. The instructions I had been given by Dr. Kissinger when I left for Cambodia in early 1974 was "Go and fight. Don't get yourself involved in negotiations." To the best of my knowledge. Dr. Kissinger does not believe that the people in the field have a sufficient grasp of the global picture, nor the contacts, to negotiate a solution. In Laos, it was somewhat different: the local Lao factions were negotiating among themselves and we were just "facilitators". It is quite possible that elements in Washington supported my efforts with other important players, and perhaps even Dr. Kissinger was among them. When what you do appears to lead to positive results, others jump on the bandwagon. Dr. Kissinger and I have had a strange relationship. We have similar backgrounds. I admire Dr. Kissinger's keen intellect. Today, historians and pundits are a lot more critical of Dr. Kissinger than in the 1970s when Henry Kissinger was on the cover

of TIME MAGAZINE as superman. It is a fact that you see a problem differently when you are on the ground as a field Commander than when you are in Washington and look at the overall picture. Any differences which may have existed between Dr. Kissinger and myself are largely a difference of perception. If you are on the ground and you see what's going on, you hear what people are saying, and you see the battle fatigue of the civilians and the fighting forces, you come to one conclusion. Therefore, as Field Commander, I may have had a more parochial vision compared to Dr. Kissinger who looked at the same issue from the global point of view – which might include how the Chinese felt about it, where the Soviets stood on developments, and how did Laos fit into the overall picture of containing communism.

In bringing about a negotiated solution in Laos, I had the full support of the French Ambassador, André Ross, who went on to be Ambassador in Japan, India, and Secretary General at the French Foreign Office. I had the impression that the Soviet Ambassador to Laos also favored emphasis on negotiations. As far as I know, no efforts were made to throw a monkey wrench into our efforts to find a negotiated solutions. The Australian Ambassador also was helpful. In Vientiane, I felt that I had the support of some other foreign missions. Not getting much guidance from Washington, I did not feel completely isolated. It probably reinforced my tendency to take decisions without asking too many questions or solliciting advice from Washington.

Q: Can we talk a bit about the media in Laos? What was your impression of media interest and reporting there?

DEAN: I met many journalists – foreign and American – who were to follow me into Cambodia. The lady who wrote the book "The Fall of Phnom Penh",

Dieudonnee Tan Berge, was a Dutch journalist in Laos and later in Cambodia. She interviewed me years later on her book on Indochina. She, as most journalists, was witness to what was going on. They saw the suffering of the civilian populations. Representatives of the non-governmental agencies and the International Red Cross had an accurate evaluation of the destruction, the battle fatigue of the civilian population, and they sympathized with the Lao people. On the whole in Laos, I felt that the media was not unfriendly. Certainly, the European press was not unfriendly. Yet, by the end of 1973, Laos was a side-show. Everybody was focusing on Vietnam. By 1973, the resident journalists, and even visiting press people, were not hostile to my efforts to press for a negotiated solution. Some were even helpful!

A final word about Laos. The Lao got caught in a war not of their choosing, first by the French, and then by the United States. They certainly did not want Vietnamese occupation or communist ideology. They are a rather smiling, friendly, docile, uncomplicated people, who quickly gained the hearts of most foreigners who served there. They are not impulsive warriors. Most of them are not great intellectuals, but they have a lifestyle and a Buddhist approach to life which endears then to many people. They lived in a different era from the rest of their neighbors. More isolated today, Laos, still under communist-inspired leadership, is very much linked to the more dynamic Thai society. Helping to make peace was one of the most satisfying moments in my professional life. My wife and I still have some Lao friends. Fortunately, only a few Lao suffered after the 1975 communist take-over. Some of our friends found safety in France and in the United States.

Laos was first caught in a struggle between Japan and Western colonialism. Then, reoccupation by the former colonial power. Then, war between

France and Vietnamese communist expansionism; and finally, U.S. efforts to contain Vietnamese communism. Lao independence did not bring economic development nor modernity as envisioned by the Lao elite. War and conflict were the order of the day for more than 25 years for most of the rural population. Even after the American withdrawal from Indochina, Laos did not participate in the economic boom that characterized the 1980s and 1990s in Southeast Asia.

Prince Souvanna Phouma, son of the Viceroy of Laos, saw the problem, not only what was best for the well educated elite but what he thought was best for the great majority of the Lao rural population. The solution of a coalition government with the communist Pathet Lao was probably the best solution possible at the time 1973. It did not last once South Vietnam was taken over completely by the North and the Khmer Rouge entered Phnom Penh. The Indochina conflict was also a struggle for independence, without foreign interference. The interim coalition government solution which we helped to broker in 1973 led to a complete takeover by the Pathet Lao of the country in 1975. But the basic problem remains of taking a very under-developed society and country and bringing it into the modern world. For that task, the Laos of today still needs the West, including the United States. Whether Laos has a a communist government or a non-communist regime does not really matter. Laos needs the know-how and the capital to develop its potential, and for that it must look to the West, Japan, and its more advanced neighbors in Southeast Asia.

Q: Let's move to Cambodia. How did your Cambodian assignment develop? You left Laos in October 1973.

DEAN: I stayed on with Ambassador Whitehouse in Laos for a very short

period of time. It must have been in November that I left Laos for the last time. I never returned to that country, even after retirement from the Foreign Service, despite many invitations from Phoumi Vong Vichit who was President of Laos by that time.

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